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HOW MUCH IS LEFT OF THE OLD DOCTRINES?

A Book for the People

BY

WASHINGTON GLADDEN



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE

THIS little book, like "Who Wrote the Bible?" is not for the scholars, but for the people. No claim to special theological or scientific knowledge can be set up by the writer; he has only sought to bring together the terms of the theological equation as they are understood by many well-instructed men of the present day. The need of cancellation is made apparent by such a restatement: we get rid of fractions, and secure a more intelligible theory of religion.

It will be evident to the reader that these chapters have been submitted to the test of popular presentation. Their direct and familiar style is not the result of literary artifice; they are the words of a man speaking face to face with his fellow men. Sometimes, as on pages 57 and 58, the illustrations are drawn from the immediate surroundings, and would lose all their force if the circumstances were not permitted to appear. No apology is therefore made for letting these words go forth in this colloquial form; the purpose which

they are intended to fulfill would not be secured by literary reconstruction.

In trying to state the substance of what is believed at the present day it has been necessary to make many quotations; these are part of the argument, generally the best part of it, and I have incorporated them in the text where they belong, instead of segregating them in appendices or footnotes.

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

First Congregational Church,
Columbus, Ohio, October 25, 1899.

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WHAT IS LEFT OF THE OLD DOCTRINES?

I

BELIEF IN GOD

THE time has come for some of us who call ourselves Christians to take an inventory of the beliefs of which we find ourselves in possession. Theological labels we are constrained to decline until the meaning of some of them is better defined. Orthodox we know that we are not, if that implies subscription to creeds framed in the sixteenth century; and if Liberalism is mainly criticism and denial, or if, as is widely assumed, it signifies defiance of all wholesome restraints and conventions, then we are not Liberals. But we still profess and call ourselves Christians; and we need to make clear to our own minds just what this involves, so far as concerns the intellectual life. We may be misunderstood by those to whom the wearing of the aforesaid labels is a matter of great importance, but that need not disturb us if we only understand ourselves.

The main question before us implies that

changes have been taking place in the old doctrines; that portions of them are obsolete or obsolescent: that in form and content they are different now from what once they were. This implication will at once be challenged.[2] Doctrines that are true, it will be said, cannot be mutable; they must be as true for one generation as for another.[3] A creed that is constantly reshaped must be a compend of error.[4] But shall we say that the vine which bore of branches and of clusters fivefold more than it had five years ago is not a true vine; or that the gray-bearded sage who thirty years ago was a man in his stalwart prime, and thirty years before that a ruddy-faced youth just passing out of adolescence, and twenty years before that a helpless infant in his mother's arms is not a true man?[5] Is not every living thing constantly changing, not only in form, but in substance?[6] If Christian doctrine is a living thing, it must be undergoing changes.[7]

Christian doctrine consists of the opinions and beliefs of men concerning God and his relations. As the generations pass, and men learn more about themselves and the world in which they live and the works of God in the world, their point of view changes, and their doctrines are modified by their growing knowledge.

"Nay, but," some wise man will say, "Christian doctrine is all drawn from the Bible, and the Bible does not change; the truth is all there; all we have to do is to interpret it rightly, and then we have

the everlasting and unchangeable truth." That statement is not quite correct, for our doctrines, if they are true and complete, are drawn from other sources as well as from the Bible. They are drawn also from our knowledge of ourselves, and of the world in which we live. But, even admitting all this, it is still true that the enlargement of our knowledge, and the change in our point of view, lead us to interpret the Bible differently. We do not take the same view of the Bible itself that we took; it is quite impossible that we should. Without a doubt more carefully, we have gone to the Bible itself to find out what kind of book it is, and the Bible has plainly told us that it is not the kind of book that we once thought it to be. It is a better book, a far more useful book, but it is a different book. And therefore, because our view of the book has changed, and our methods of interpreting it have changed our doctrines, even in their Biblical elements, must have undergone considerable change.

One who accepts the Bible as authority should look for changes in theology. One whole book of the New Testament, the Epistle to the Hebrews, is devoted to the description of a great doctrinal evolution. The writer shows how the Christian dispensation had been substituted for the Jewish dispensation; how an old theology had given place to a new theology. "For if that first covenant had been faultless," he says, "then should no place have been sought for the second. . . . In that

saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."[1]

In God's progressive revelation of himself to the world there is always that which decayeth and waxeth old, and is ready to vanish away. The revelation is always through life, and this is the process of life. "Dying, and behold we live" is a biological law. It is only by the waste and destruction of old tissues that new tissues are formed.

And yet, although our bodies change in form and size and appearance, and although the materials of which they are composed are constantly changing, they are the same bodies; the principle of identity is there; there is a continuity of life and experience which is a fact as less positive than the fact of perennial change. And in like manner the writer to the Hebrews shows that the essential truth of that old covenant survives, under changed forms, in the new. This is what, as I trust, we shall find in these studies. "We have kept," says Dr. Sabatier, "and still repeat the dogmas of early times; but we pour into them unconsciously a new meaning. The terms do not change, but the ideas and their interpretation are renewed with each generation. This is particularly the work of the theologian. We spend our time, consciously or unconsciously, in putting new wine into old bottles. There is not a single dogma

[1] Heb. viii.

dating from two or three centuries back which is repeated with the same meaning as in its origination. We still speak of the inspiration of the prophets and of the apostles, of atonement, of the Trinity, of the divinity of Christ, of miracles; but, whether in a greater or a less degree, we understand them differently from our fathers. The river flows on, even when the waters are apparently stagnant at the surface. But the elasticity of words and formulas has a limit. There comes a time when the new wine causes the old bottles to break, and when it becomes necessary for the mind to make new vessels to receive it. Then new words appear in languages and new dogmas in theology. It is thus that the dogmas of justification by faith and of universal priesthood came into prominence in the sixteenth century. New dogmas, do we call them? Rather, we should say, old ones rising again with new energy.[1]

"How much is left of the old doctrines?" is the question we are asking. Our study will show us that though the phrases which we use are modified, and some of the conceptions are altered, the substance of the old truth remains.

What do we mean by the old doctrines? I shall not go back very far: I shall consider only the doctrines that were generally believed in our evangelical churches in England and America from fifty to one hundred years ago, in days which some of us can well remember. Within the last half of

[1] *The Vitality of Christian Dogmas*, pp. 45–48.

this century some important changes have been taking place. It was in 1838 that the New School Presbyterians in America separated from the Old School; it was in 1831 that McLeod Campbell was excommunicated from the Scottish church; it was in 1850–51, that Dr. Horace Bushnell, in Hartford, was on trial for heresy; it was in 1859 that Darwin's "Origin of Species" was published; and the rapid movement, of thought in the theological and in the scientific world since those days has resulted in the modifications of belief which we are now to consider.

The first question before us concerns the central doctrine of theology,—the doctrine of God. Has that doctrine essentially changed during the last half of this century? Are our beliefs about God the same beliefs that were generally held fifty years ago?

There are those among us who will say very positively that the old doctrine of God has become antiquated; that intelligent men no longer accept the theory of the existence of such a Being as our fathers believed in and worshiped. Some of them will recall the rather contemptuous use by Matthew Arnold of the common definition of God, "a personal First Cause that thinks and loves, the moral and intelligent Governor of the universe," and of his reiterated statement that this definition cannot possibly be verified. Some of them will remember the many arguments of Mr. Herbert Spencer, which

maintain that although there may be such a God as this, we do not and cannot know anything about him; that if he exists he is unknowable.

What we do know, say some of these philosophers, is the existence of a universe, a mighty aggregation of forces, marvellously coordinated and cooperating for the production of the results we see about us; a Cosmos, or Universal Order, which we cannot help regarding with wonder and awe, toward which our deepest feelings must be akin to those of worship. Some of those sturdy doubters and deniers seem to acknowledge that this very feeling of awe and worship of which man can never rid himself must signify something. So Strauss insisted that those who, with him, had thrown away the old theology had still a religion; that from this mighty Cosmos itself they still bowed down with reverence. And truly, if a man will take time to think — to get into his mind some conception of the universe in which he lives — he will be forced to wonder and to worship. "This Universe," cries Carlyle, "what could the wild man know of it; what can we yet know? That it is a Force, and thousandfold complexity of Forces; a Force which is *not* we. That is all; it is not we, it is altogether different from us. Force, Force, everywhere Force; we ourselves a mysterious Force in the centre of that. There is not a leaf rotting on the highway but has Force in it: how else could it rot? Nay, surely, to the atheistic thinker, if such an one were possible, it must be a miracle

too, this huge, illimitable whirlwind of force which envelops us here; never resting, whirlwind, high as Immensity, old as Eternity. What is it? God's creation, the religious people answer; It is the Almighty God's. Atheistic science babbles poorly of it with scientific nomenclatures, experiments and what not: as if it were a poor dead thing, to be bottled up in Leyden jars and sold over counters; but the natural sense of man, in all times, if he will honestly apply his sense, proclaims it to be a living thing—ah, an unspeakable, godlike thing; towards which the best attitude for us, there never so much science, is awe, devout prostration and humility of soul; worship, if not in words, then in silence.[1]

So much all serious minds must confess when some glimpses of the majesty and the wonder of this universe are vouchsafed them. Worship they must and will; that impulse is human; to stifle it is to belie our nature.

But what is it that we worship? Is it Force, indeed? Is there anything in any manifestation of physical energy that calls for the kind of feeling which we name worship? There is energy in a grain of gunpowder, in a can of dynamite, in the steam rushing into the cylinder, in the current speeding from the dynamo; is anything there that inspires a single throb of worshipful feeling? Multiply force of this kind even to infinity; would it awaken in you any emotions of reveren-

[1] *On Heroes*, p. 242, Universal Edition.

tial love? No; I am sure that we are not and cannot be worshipers of mere force.

Nor is The All of Things an object of worship. An mere aggregation does not awaken in us reverence. If things do not in themselves appeal to our veneration, no accumulation of them could do so. Quantity is not worshipful. Neither the addition table nor the multiplication table can be used to stimulate devotion.

There are those who think that they reverence The All — who call themselves Pantheists; but if they do so it is by investing The All with personal or spiritual qualities. Thus Strauss declares that he worships the Cosmos because "order and law, *reason and goodness*," are the soul of it. But how reason and goodness can exist apart from personality Strauss has never explained to us.

Another very brave unbeliever confesses and maintains that those who have rejected the doctrine of an intelligent and beneficent Creator of the world are the ones to hold on to the very truth, under their belief in a "reasonable tendency in the universe," and their "faith in the reality of the good." Neither science nor virtue can exist, he says, unless we believe both these things: that the universe is reasonable, and that goodness is the fundamental reality. "Now is not this," he asks, "in essence just the same condition of life as that represented by the doctrine of the benevolent and intelligent Creator and Governor of the world?" It is, I answer, the very same thing.

For reasonableness and goodness are not physical but psychical qualities; you cannot, if you try ever so hard, conceive of them as belonging to things or to systems of things; they belong to persons; and thus the fundamental assumption, on which all science and all morality rest, is identical with the old doctrine of God.

The fundamental premise of science is that Nature is rational; that every phenomenon admits of a rational explanation. That would seem to be only another way of saying that the Source of Nature is a Reason akin to our own. The spread of knowledge must bring us into closer acquaintance with this eternal Reason.

The author of the Book of Daniel points onward to a day when many should run to and fro, and knowledge should be increased. ("We seem to be living in the morning of that day.) The spread of intelligence upon the earth since the discovery of America and the invention of movable types is marvelous. Within the memory of most of us the opportunities of education have been greatly extended. Multitudes who once did scarcely more than vegetate are now learning to think. It is a tremendous peril to which the world exposes itself when it sets so many people to thinking, but we have risked it and must make the best of it. The changes which are taking place in our beliefs about God are due to the fact that a great many people are thinking about things visible and invisible, trying to understand them and to make them agree with one another.

Men have, indeed, always been thinking about the world in which they live; they have known something, and have speculated much and wondered more, about its physical features, its plains, mountains, rivers, seas, the clouds in its skies, the sun that lights it by day, and the moon and stars that are its lamps by night. The shepherd on the lonely Mesopotamian pastures, the sailor in his frail boat crossing the inland sea or coasting along the ocean's shore, had many thoughts about this world and its surroundings, about the shape and size of it, and the physical forces which bear rule upon it. But modern thought about the world is quite unlike that ancient way of thinking.

In the first place, modern thought apprehends, in some measure, the fact of a universe, which is a word the meaning of which none of the philosophers of ancient times could have comprehended. Our common apprehension of these things is one that would have overwhelmed with bewilderment and confusion Herodotus or Aristotle. The thought which was common to the great thinkers of the ancient time, and to the men who wrote the Bible, was that this earth was the central and stable platform of the Creation, above which various meteorological phenomena appeared, these being created and set in motion wholly for the service and convenience of man. Dante's cosmogony was a sample of the explanations which ancient thought had given to the phenomena of the earth and the heavens. With the advent of the Copernican astron-

ously," says Mr. Fiske, "the funnel-shaped Inferno, the steep mountain of Purgatory, crowned with its terrestrial paradise, and those concentric spheres of Heaven wherein beatified saints held weird and subtle converse, all went their way to the limbo prepared for the childlike fancies of untaught minds, whither Hades and Valhalla had gone before them." In our day it is hard to realize the startling effect of the discovery that man does not dwell at the centre of things, but is the denizen of an obscure and tiny speck of cosmical matter quite invisible amid the innumerable throng of flaming suns that make up our galaxy.[1] Modern thought about the extent and vastness of the universe in which we live thus seems to differ by the diameter of immensity from the thought of the olden time. The world in which the ancients supposed themselves to be living, as compared with the universe in which we know ourselves to be living, was as a drop of water to the ocean.

In the second place modern thought differs from the thought of a former time not less radically respecting the manner in which the universe has come into being. The older thought regarded creation as a mechanical process; things were made outright, as a watchmaker makes a watch. The Creator first called into being the matter of which the world is composed, and then took it and shaped it into the various forms which we now see about us; heaping up the mountains and scooping out

[1] *The Destiny of Man*, pp. 14, 15.

the valleys by the flat of his night; shaping the crystals by an act of volition; creating, by the exertion of direct power, the manifold species of living things, just as they now exist, and endowing them with reproductive power, so that each should perpetuate its kind; making, in the morning of the creation, the pine and the oak and the elm and the maple, the rose and the lily and the apple and the pear, and all the rest of the plants; the horse and the ox and the elephant and the wolf and the zebra and the giraffe and the dog and the sheep, and all the rest of the mammals; the eagle and the robin and the raven, and all the rest of the birds; the pickerel and the trout and the minnow, and all the rest of the fishes; the bee and the wasp and the butterfly, and all the rest of the insects; making all the tribes of living creatures, just as we have them now, stocking the earth and the air and the waters with living inhabitants by one stupendous act of creative power; so that there were just as many kinds, and just the same kinds, of living things upon the earth when the earth was a week old as there are to-day,—more, probably, for there are certainly some skeletons and fossils in our museums which represent races that are no longer in existence. This is, for substance, the thought about the manner in which the world and its inhabitants came into being which was entertained by thinkers and philosophers until a very recent date. The modern world is not thinking along this line respecting the origin of the world

and the life upon its surface. The beliefs about the method of creation which were held when I was a boy by nearly all intelligent men are not held to-day by any intelligent man. It is now known as well as anything can be known that the earth assumed its present form as the result of forces acting through long aeons, whose action we can observe and measure; how the rocks were formed, how the mountains were heaved up, how the valleys were scooped out, we know as well as we know how the Brooklyn Bridge was built; and we know that the work was going on for hundreds of thousands of years. We know that the various tribes of life have passed through many changes of form and function; that for ages on ages, these changes have been going on, the forms of life gradually rising from the lower to the higher. The record is written in the rocks, and no man of intelligence can contradict it. The progress of life is from the simple to the complex, from the more generalized to the more specialized; and there is plenty of evidence of the transformation of one species into another. This is the way things have come to be what they are; they are linked together genetically; what has taken place in nature was not the offhand manufacture of all created things, but their gradual becoming.

This way of thinking about things has become very nearly universal. We all assume, whenever we begin to study any subject in science, in history, in archæology, in sociology, that one thing natu-

rally grows out of another: that the life of one generation is closely connected with the life of the generations that have preceded it; that languages, customs, laws, institutions, are products of development. It is this mighty thought about the genetic relations of things that has taken possession of the mind of the world. It is before this thought that the modern Christian is standing,—is in either solicitous state of mind. What can he do with it? Does it not contradict many of the doctrines which he has regarded as essential to faith? Does it not assail the authority of the Bible? Does it not overthrow the entire Christian system? So some people are telling him,—some, I regret to say, who ought to be in better business. And it is true that if the authority of the Bible stands or falls with its scientific inerrancy, then the Bible can no longer be regarded as authority; and that if to be a Christian it is necessary to believe that the world and all things therein were created out of nothing and given their present forms in 144 hours, no intelligent man can be a Christian any longer.

But I, for one, am going, in spite of both Mr. Ingersoll and Mr. Moody, to believe a little longer yet that the Bible is worth a great deal to mankind, after you have fully recognized the fact that it is not an authority in geology and astronomy; and that one may be a Christian without believing any of the well established facts of modern science. I am going to maintain that the intelligent Christian may stand in the presence of modern thought,

and accept everything that has been proved by science or history or criticism, and not be frightened at all by any of it; firmly believing that the great verities of the Christian faith will still remain untouched.

There are those to whom the doctrine of Evolution seems atheistic; they think that it banishes God from the universe. But the atheism is not in evolution; it is in the man who insists on putting an atheistic interpretation upon it. The fool can always say in his heart, "There is no God;" he said it long before Darwin; he said it with a persistent emphasis in the days when the old deistic conception was current of a God who manufactured a universe out of hand and stocked it with forces and wound it up and set it running; — in the days when the conception of an orderly progress in the creation had scarcely dawned upon the human mind. It may be that some people can more easily believe in a God who only now and then visits this world to interfere in a miraculous way with the working of the laws which he has ordained; for myself I find it easier to believe in one who is present in all the forces of nature, revealing himself not so convincingly by occasional interruptions of the order as by the order itself.

The truth is that modern thought is conducting us to a belief in God which comes far nearer to a knowledge of him than any of the intellectual processes of the past ever carried us; and that it is along the paths which Evolution has opened to us

that we are drawing near to God. The first discussions of this doctrine excited much alarm; it seemed to many that it banished God from his universe. The fear was puerile. The child who looks upon an automatic toy may imagine that it is self-moved; the mature mind knows that there is a hidden force that moves it. Mr. Darwin's theory of the origin of species was an explanation of the *method of creating*; it did not attempt to account for the existence of those primal forces and tendencies under whose action and interaction this work of development went on. Under that theory it was still correct to say, "In the beginning God." The last words of this first great treatise, "The Origin of Species," must not be forgotten: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that while this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved."

It is true, however, that while students have been busy upon the minutiæ of evolution — studying fishes' fins and birds' wings and horses' toes — the larger implications of the subject have been much neglected; and there have been a good many among them who could not see the woods for the trees. Specialization is apt to develop a provincial mind; the specialist knows his own province, but is skeptical about the existence of others, and

has no knowledge of larger relations. But since the appearance of Mr. Darwin's essay time enough has now elapsed to enable some of the philosophers of evolution to take a comprehensive view of all the facts; and as the returns begin to come in from the whole field, some things plainly appear which at first were dimly seen.

It would be interesting, if there were time, to glance at some of the conclusions with reference to the truth of theism which have been reached in recent years, by eminent scientific men who are not theologians, and who have approached the subject from the scientific side.

One of the most striking of these testimonies was that of George John Romanes, the eminent psychologist and zoologist, whose book, written twenty years ago, and entitled "A Candid Examination of Theism by Physicus," is the strongest attack that I have ever read upon the ordinary proofs of the divine existence. Mr. Romanes, much against his own inclination, had convinced himself that the evolutionary doctrines had demolished all those proofs, and in a most pathetic confession he declared that the faith in which his soul had reposed from his childhood was gone forever. But Mr. Romanes kept thinking, and, gradually, some of the larger implications of the subject began to appear to him. He was compelled to revise the arguments by which he had, as he supposed, demolished theism, and at length to acknowledge that they were fallacious, and that evolution had

strengthened rather than weakened our reasons for believing in God.

Our own John Fiske was regarded by Mr. Darwin as the ablest exponent of evolution upon this continent. Mr. Darwin paid Mr. Fiske the compliment of saying that he was the clearest writer on philosophical subjects that he had ever read. In the earlier years of his evolutionary studies Mr. Fiske was reserved in the expression of his opinions respecting the theological bearings of evolution. But in recent years, since he has had time to assemble and organize the results of his investigations, his utterances have been increasing in clearness and positiveness. Those two little books, "The Destiny of Man" and "The Idea of God," have been a veritable evangel to many groping minds. And that other small volume, lately published, "Through Nature to God," is much more important than anything he has hitherto said.

In the report which I am now trying to bring to you upon the latest phases of theism, I can do you no greater service than to give you, briefly, and largely in my own words, an outline of the argument of the concluding essay of this book on "The Everlasting Reality of Religion."

The argument starts with the Spencerian definition of life as "the continuous adjustment of inner relations to outer relations." "The most fundamental characteristic of living things," says Mr. Fiske, "is their response to external stimuli. If you come upon a dog lying by the roadside and

are in doubt whether he is alive, you poke him with a stick. If you get no response, you presently think that it is a dead dog. So, if a tree fails to put forth leaves it is an indication of death. Pour water on a drooping plant and it shows its life by rearing its head; this is the result of a continuous adjustment of relations within the plant to relations existing outside of it. . . . All life upon the globe, whether physical or psychical, represents continued adjustment of inner to outer relations."[1]

The lungs and the atmosphere are fitted for each other; the relations of the vital air from without, received by the lungs within, is the momentary and constant condition of life. The food of the gardens and the fields is adapted to our digestive organs, and our organs are adjusted to the stimulus of the food, and the adjustment must be continuous. A striking instance of this biological adjustment is the evolution of the eye. In Mr. Lida's words, "there was first a concentration of pigment grains in a particular dermal sac, making that spot particularly sensitive to the light; then came, by slow degrees, the heightened translucence, the convexity of surface, the refracting humors, and the multiplication of nerve vesicles arranging themselves as retinal rods. And what was the result of all this for the creature in whom organs of vision were thus developed? Plainly was an immense extension of the range, complexity, and definiteness of the adjustment of inner relations to outer rela-

[1] *Through Nature to God*, pp. 178–180.

tions. In other words there was an immense increase of life. Then came into existence, moreover, for those with eyes to see it, a mighty visible world that for sightless creatures had been virtually non-existent."[1]

The organs of touch and taste and hearing have been developed in precisely the same way. In all these cases we clearly see how the forms of the life within have been shaped to receive the gifts of the world without. The evolution of the eye, as we see it going on, is a process of preparation for the great revelation that is to be made, by and by, of the visible glory of the universe. It is because there are waiting outside skies and fields and flowers and gems, wonders of form and color, faces beautiful with the light of a deathless love, that the eye is slowly moulded into form. It is because the sound of many waters, and the caroling of birds, and the music of mighty symphonies, and the thrilling tones of loving voices are soaking to reveal themselves to the waiting soul, that the ear is formed for hearing. Nay, it is in and by the very action of the elements without that these faculties within are summoned into being. It is the light softly playing on those sensitive pigments that assembles the tissues by which the eye is formed. It is by the waves of sound gently beating upon the rudimentary ear, and saying, "Let us come in, and bring our music with us!" that the ear has been created. The ego-long process by

[1] *Through Nature to God*, p. 184.

which each of these organs has been shaped is a clear witness to the reality of some wondrous gift that is coming into the life by means of it. We know when we see such an organ growing that there is some precious commerce on the ocean of existence for which it is to be the port of entry. The existence of such an organ or faculty is the sign of some vital correlation between the life within and the world without.

Take this fundamental law of the evolution of life, and apply it to the life of humanity. From the dawn of love in human life, the impulse to worship, to pray, to believe in an unseen world, has found constant expression. Religion is one of the great factors of human history. And the religious life of the race, Mr. Fiske tells us, has always involved these three elements: belief in a quasi-human God, in a future life, and in some relation between conduct here and happiness hereafter. By a quasi-human God is meant a God between whom and ourselves there can be relations of knowledge and affection; whose kinsmen we are; who knows us and loves us. "As a matter of history," says Mr. Fiske, "the existence of a quasi-human God has always been an assumption, or postulate, / It is something which men have all along taken for granted. It probably never occurred to any one to try to prove the existence of such a God until it was doubted; and doubts on that subject are very modern. Omitting from the count a few score ingenious philosophers, it may be said that all man-

kind — the wisest and the simplest — have taken for granted the existence of a Deity, or deities, of a psychical nature more or less similar to that of humanity. ... Such a postulate has formed a part of all human thinking from primitive ages down to the present time."[1]

Here, then, is the fact of religion. And what are the dimensions of this fact? "None can deny," says Mr. Fiske, "that it is the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the existence of mankind upon the earth."[2] The greatest fact of human history — the most influential fact — is this universal belief in an unseen world and in a God who is the Father of our spirits. *It is this fact, which evolution, through countless ages, has been producing.* The same process of development by which the eye and the ear were formed has evolved this universal human tendency to reach out toward an unseen world, to feel after God, if haply we may find him.

If, now, this universal hunger for a God whom we can know and love, this hunger which evolution has taken so many centuries to develop, is a hunger which there is nothing in the universe to satisfy; if the spiritual eye has been developed, through ages of human experience, that it may gaze upon vacancy, fixing its piteous appeal upon the blackness of darkness forever, then all that is fundamental in the philosophy of evolution is discredited and set at naught.

[1] *Through Nature to God*, pp. 163, 164.

[2] Ibid. p. 180.

"If the relation thus established," says Mr. Fiske, "in the morning twilight of Man's existence, between the Human Soul and a world invisible and immaterial, is a relation of which only the subjective term is real and the objective term is non-existent, then I say it is something utterly without precedent in the whole history of creation. All the analogies of evolution, so far as we have been able to decipher it, are overwhelming against any such supposition. . . . All the analogies of nature fairly shout against the assumption of such a breach of continuity between the evolution of man and all previous evolution. So far as our knowledge of nature goes, the whole momentum of it carries us onward to the conclusion that the Unseen World as the objective term in a relation of fundamental importance that has coexisted with the whole career of Mankind, has a real existence; and it is but following out the analogy to regard the unseen world as the theatre where the ethical process is destined to reach its full consummation."[1]

These final words of this strong thinker put to silence, as with the blast of a mighty trumpet, the small cavils of a generation of sciolists:—

"The lesson of evolution is that through all these weary ages the human soul has not been cherishing in Religion a delusive phantom; but, in spite of seemingly endless groping and stumbling, it has been rising to the recognition of its essential

[1] Page 91.

kinship with the ever-living God. Of all the implications of the doctrine of evolution with regard to Man, I believe the very deepest and strongest to be that which asserts the everlasting reality of religion.[1]

Here we may rest our argument. I am sure that we have found some reason for believing that whatever may have happened to the other doctrines of religion, the foundation of it all standeth sure.

Have there been no changes, then, in our doctrine of God? Yes, there have been many changes.

In the first place, the arguments which men used to employ to prove the existence of God are those we relied on so much as they used to be; science has greatly weakened the force of some of them; but it has given us in their stead that broader argument which we have just been considering.

In the second place, our view of the character of God has greatly changed. We do not think and say the same things about Him that we used to think and say. We do not try to explain all his thoughts and feelings and purposes so much as we used to do. We have more perfectly learned what the Psalmist meant when he said, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." We know that Infinite Being must contain depths that the plummet of our understanding cannot fathom.

One hundred years ago, even fifty years ago, men had very definite statements to make about God's moral government. They thought that they understood it all perfectly; they seemed to think

[1] Page 191.

that it was substantially like one of our political governments, and was founded on just the same kind of expediencies as those on which our governments rest. What would be politic for an earthly ruler, they argued, God must do. Out of that conception a great many notions sprung which were altogether crude and unworthy. The doctrines of retribution, the doctrines of forgiveness, which rested on this forensic conception, have largely passed away.

But while many of the childish and inadequate notions about God are disappearing from human thought, belief in Him as our Heavenly Father, as the Infinite Love which is behind all law, has not been shaken in the minds of reasonable men. There never was an hour when so many men could say from the heart, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth;" there was never an hour when this belief was bulwarked by such an accumulation of scientific knowledge. It is a very shallow philosophy which imagines that the one subject in which human beings have always been more deeply interested than in any other can be dismissed, as mere superstition, by the wave of an orator's hand; or that men are likely, very soon, in the presence of this majestic universe, to cease to wonder or to worship before the Power that has called it into existence. For one, I firmly believe that modern thought is laboriously building up a foundation for our faith far more firm and broad than that on which men rested their souls in what were known as the ages of faith.

The arguments which men were using fifty years ago to prove the existence of God all embodied profound truth, but in the light of modern science they need restatement. When an ordaining council I once heard the question put to a young man whose mind was alive with the movement of the time, what he thought about Paley's argument for theism. "Oh, it was all very well for its day," he answered: "it called attention to some indications of purpose; but the proofs of the purpose which have been shown us since by such writers as Darwin and Tyndal, and Huxley throw all that exhibit into the shade." The venerable examiners looked at one another in blank amazement. They understood not the saying, but the candidate had told them the exact truth. The teleology of modern science is far more cogent than that of Paley's generation.

It may be doubted whether we shall ever have scientific demonstration of the existence of God. God is a spirit, and our deepest knowledge of Him must be spiritual rather than scientific. But the more complete is our scientific knowledge the stronger will be the probability of the existence of God. Surely if God is in his world, He must be revealing himself to us in all its laws and forces, and therefore all ordered knowledge of the world must be bringing Him nearer to our thought, and every science must be tributary to that great unifying revelation wherein faith and knowledge are no longer twain, but one.

II

HOW THE WORLDS WERE MADE

In the preceding chapter we considered the relation of Evolution to the belief in God, showing how the old theistic arguments have been modified and strengthened by the discovery that creation is the result, not of an instantaneous fiat, but of a continuous process. Inasmuch as the changes which have taken place within the past fifty years in our theological statements have mainly resulted from the prevalence of evolutionary theories, it may be well to examine a little more fully the significance of the doctrine of Evolution. In the first chapter of John's Gospel we find a doctrine of origins whose philosophy is not yet antiquated: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made." "Word" in the Greek is Logos; it has a double significance: it means both thought and expression, the idea and its symbol. The Greeks, therefore, came to use Logos as primarily denoting the eternal Reason, and secondarily the utterance or manifestation of

that Reason. / Of course thought must exist before expression. / When, therefore, we are told that in the beginning was the Word, the truth is brought before us that the universe originated in thought: that the foundation of it all is in the eternal Reason. / And this is the constant assumption of modern science. / Science could not proceed a single step but for the belief that that which it is investigating is intelligible; that it is possible to understand it; that it is grounded upon reason; that an intelligence, similar to our intelligence, has established the order and law which it expects to find in every province. The universe is reasonable: it is in harmony with reason; it can be made intelligible to reason; it must have originated in the eternal Reason. / This, I say, is the fundamental postulate of all scientific investigation: any scientific man stultifies himself if he denies it; it is no more possible to get away from it than it is to get away from your shadow; and the whole mighty accumulation of scientific knowledge is one long concurrent and unanimous testimony to the truth that the universe is intelligible. / How it could be intelligible if it had not originated in Intelligence I defy any man to explain. /

If, therefore, any one supposes that evolution has undermined the doctrine of an intelligent Author of the Universe, he cannot too soon rid himself of that notion. There are those, no doubt, who imagine that evolution has somehow supplanted God; that there is some kind of an abstraction or

apparatus called evolution, which has neither mind nor will, which originated plainlessly, which works on in an haphazard way, and which by an infinite series of hits and misses has brought forth the universe as it now exists. There are scientific men with an anti-theological bias so strong that they are often inclined to use language which squints in this atheistic direction. But sound thinking gives no room for any such conceptions. As I have said in the preceding chapter, there never was a time when the belief in creative intelligence had so much proof to support it as it has to-day. The doctrine of evolution, instead of weakening the faith in God of all those who have studied it profoundly, has given to many of them their strongest reasons for believing in an all-wise God.

What, then, is the doctrine of evolution? The word signifies unfolding, or opening out. The unrolling of a map is an evolution. The opening of a flower bud is an evolution. The term would therefore itself appear to suggest some previous process of thought or activity. What is unfolded must first have been enfolded; what is unrolled must first have been rolled. Evolution implies involution. The process which we are watching must have been prepared for beforehand. But without putting any stress on this mere verbal argument, let us ask what evolution means in the large sense of the word, — the sense in which it is most frequently used.

"To the scientific world," says the professor of

biology in Wooster University, "evolution is a universal law of nature, whereby the existing order of things in the visible universe as viewed by man, including man himself, has come into its present state of existence through the interaction of certain forces operating in the direction of a progressive change from some unknown primitive condition of things." To the Christian the same thought might be expressed by saying that evolution is the divine mode of creation, whereby God has wrought out the existing order of things through the continuous operation of his creative power." These two definitions, as I understand them, are only different ways of expressing the same truth.

The real question is whether the world as we see it to-day, with the different kinds of animals and plants upon it, was created in the beginning just as it now is, or substantially as it now is, making allowance for such changes as man himself has wrought; or whether only a few forms of life were originally created, and whether these forms, by virtue of the forces with which they were endowed, and by their action upon one another, and the reaction of their environment upon them, have brought forth, in a long series of gradual changes, the multitudinous forms of life that now appear. Was it true that in the morning of the creation, when the world came forth from the fiat of the Creator, the same plants and the same animals existed upon the earth as those which now exist; that the pine and the oak and the beech and the

birch and the rose and the myrtle and the daisy and the goldenrod and the wheat and the maize and all the rest of the plants which we now have were then in the Garden of Eden; and that the animals which we now know, or at least the wild animals and birds and fishes and insects, were of the same orders and species as those which now exist upon the earth? Or, if perchance the existing kinds of plants and animals were not all created then, in their present forms, have they been created outright since, in successive periods, and placed upon the earth?

In answering this question one or two facts come at once into clear light. It is certain that the earth itself is a very different planet from what it was in the beginning. Evidences of mighty changes, mighty changes, through which it has been passing, abound on every hand. I presume that there are still many persons who are in the habit of conceiving that the world as we see it to-day is substantially the same as it has always been; that the Creator, at the beginning, mapped out the continents and the oceans and the gulfs and the straits and the islands; that it was the Creator's finger that literally drew the course of the Euphrates and the Nile and the Amazon and the Mississippi, from their sources to the sea; that it was the Creator's hand that heaped up the mountains and the hills, hills and scooped out the valleys; that laid the masonry of the gigantic cliffs of the Yosemite and the Lauterbrunnen Thal; that manufactured the

coal and stowed it away under the hills of the Hocking valley and the Appalachian chain. Of course it is true that all this has been done by the Creator's power, but the notion to which I refer is that those features of the earth took their present form as the immediate result of a creative fiat. And I dare say that there are many good people to whom the denial of this theory would mean a dangerous kind of skepticism. It is certainly a fact which no fairly intelligent person can question that the present form of the earth is the result of a long series of physical changes. "It probably took," says the professor who must have already quoted, "for millions of years as a separate planet, before water condensed upon its surface, and it is clearly demonstrated that it has existed for other millions of years since that time."

During this period there has been in operation a constant process of progressive change, whereby, through the operation of natural agencies, such as water, atmosphere, heat and cold, and chemical affinity, the surface of the earth has been differentiated from a barren expanse of uniform character to the present varied features of land and water, continents and islands, lakes and rivers, forests and prairies, and beneath the surface, rocks and metals, coal and gas, and so on throughout the long list of natural products fitted for the use of man, — one of the most striking evidences of harmonious design, and yet so conclusively shown to have come into its present form through the opera-

tion of the law of progressive change that no intelligent person would venture to affirm that it was all created by an omnipotent fiat in the form in which we now find it. The very agencies that have wrought it all out may be readily observed to-day under our very eyes continuing the process. If any one doubts, for example, that the coal beds represent a gradual accumulation of vegetation, let him go to the mouth of the Mississippi and see the process in operation. If any one doubts that such vast accumulations of rock as the Trenton limestone under our very feet have been built up from the secretions of animal life, involving necessarily an untold lapse of time, let him go to the islands of the Pacific and examine the process where it is now going on to his observation. In short, any one who studies carefully and in detail the teachings of geology must be convinced that the earth has come into its present condition through a gradual process of progressive change; in other words, that it has been created by evolution, from a relatively primitive condition."

Thus the world was made in this way we do positively know; does not this furnish us some pretty good reasons for believing that the tribes which inhabit the earth have come into being in the same way? When we find such a stupendous illustration as this of the Creator's method, is it not reasonable to suppose that all his work of creation is done upon the same plan?

But the earth itself contains, in the close-locked

archives of its rocky crust, other and even more conclusive evidences. I said that the question before us really is whether the species now existing were created, in their present forms, in the beginning. That, as I well remember, was the view which was presented to me in my boyhood; I learned to believe that all the living things round about me were called into existence by the fiat of the Creator, in their present forms; and that every form of life to which existence was given in the birth-morning of the creation was still living upon the earth. But the record in the rocks makes it plain that this depends upon inclusion of species once existent which no longer exist, and gives us the strongest reasons for believing that most of the forms now existing are of comparatively recent origin. It is as plain as anything can be that constant changes in the forms of living beings have been taking place through all the age-long record of the earth. And it is easy for us to trace the history of some, at least, of the forms now existing, and to show how they have been modified from age to age. The fossil remains of plants and animals in the rocks exhibit to us, as Professor Mateer has told us, the following facts:—

"1. The species of animals and plants now living have only existed upon the earth for a comparatively short time, geologically speaking.

"2. While the earliest records of life upon the earth have probably all been obliterated, yet the earliest that have been preserved in fossil remains

are all lower in grade of organization than their related forms now living.

"3. There has gradually taken place all through the geological ages a constant extinction of old species and a constant appearance of new.

"4. The new species thus constantly appearing usually mark an advance over the older species preceding them.

"These are the facts. What is their significance? They indicate a progressive change, and therefore suggest the presence of an organic evolution."

The cumulative proof of this great process is, of course, too vast to be even hinted at in this brief discourse. Not only the fossils in the rocks, but the distribution of living species over the earth gives evidence of this, and comparative anatomy, which shows us the close resemblances of living creatures, and the minute gradations by which different species shade into each other, indicating that the higher may have grown out of the lower, adds its testimony. Most striking of all is the evidence from embryology, in that prenatal history of man of which the Psalmist knew very little, but of which he spoke very reverently, as we all ought to speak:—

"I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.
My frame was not hidden from thee

When I was made in secret
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
Thine eyes did see my imperfect substance,
And in thy book were all my members written,
Which day by day were fashioned
When as yet there was none of them.

Every living creature, from the lowest to the highest, begins its existence as a single, undifferentiated cell. The mighty elm, whose branches shadow an acre, was at first only a little winged seed, a single germ, which fell into the ground, and then began the process of evolution which brought forth the majestic tree. The statelest and the most powerful of the animals was, in the beginning, a single undifferentiated cell, and the same thing is equally true of man. Says Professor Drummond:—

"The embryo of the future man begins life, like the primitive savage, in a one-roomed hut, a single simple cell. This cell is round and nearly microscopic in size. When fully formed it measures only one fourth of a line in diameter, and with the naked eye can be discerned as a very fine point. An outer covering, transparent as glass, surrounds this little sphere, and in the interior, embedded in protoplasm, lies a bright globular spot. In form, in size, in composition, there is no apparent difference between this human cell and that of any other mammal. The dog, the elephant, the lion, the ape, and a thousand others begin their widely different lives in a house the same as man's. At

an earlier stage, indeed, before it has taken on its pellucid covering, this cell has affinities still more astonishing. For at that remote period the earlier forms of all living things, both plant and animal, are one. It is one of the most astounding facts of modern science that the first embryonic abodes of moss and fern and pine, of shark and crab and coral polyp, of lizard, leopard, monkey, and man are so exactly similar that the highest powers of mind and microscope fail to trace the smallest distinction between them."[1]

But the most astounding fact is that each of these forms of animal life, as it is developed from the cell, takes on, one after another, the different forms of the lower orders. There are stages in the development of a man when he cannot be distinguished from a worm, other stages when his structure is identical with that of the fish; others when you cannot distinguish him from a reptile like the frog, others when he takes the form of a bird, and so on; in the rapidly passing stages of his earlier history he is identified in shape, and apparently in substance, with one after another of his humbler fellow creatures. "In man, as in the fish," says Professor Kingsley, "the heart is at first two-chambered; then it becomes three-chambered, as in the lower reptiles, and later it develops the four-chambered condition, which it retains through life. In the blood vessels are the same gill arteries as in the frog or shark, running in the

[1] *The Ascent of Man*, p. 62.

same direction and uniting to form the same dorsal aorta. There is the same tendency to form gill slits upon the side of the neck, and in exactly the same manner, as outgrowths from the throat toward the external skin. Later the blood vessels change; the gill slits close up, all except the first, which persists as the Eustachian tube, connecting the throat with the inner ear. After a time the distinctively mammalian features become more prominent, and then comes a time when no one can decide between two embryos which is that of a dog, and which that of man. Later the two can be distinguished, but still that of man and that of a monkey show no differences, that of man presents so many monkey-like features."[1] These facts of the embryonic history of man are as well established as any facts in science. And when we consider them well, and couple them with what we know of the slow and gradual processes by which the earth and man have been formed, and with what we have learned from the fossils in the rocks respecting the progressive changes in the tribes of living creatures, it certainly does not seem incredible that the method of creation has been the method of evolution; that the different orders of living beings are genetically related; that the higher have sprung from the lower; that all things that have life are our fellow creatures by the strongest of all bonds.

There are very few geologists, and still fewer biologists, who to-day dispute this great fact of

[1] Johnson's *Cyclopædia*, art. "Evolution."

evolution. There are a few, but they do not represent the great body of scientific students. In truth this conception, that all things "consist," to use Paul's phrase, that the present is the child of the past, that genetic relations are to be looked for everywhere, has come to rule all our thinking; the evolutionary idea, the evolutionary logic, finds expression in all our serious conversation; we are all evolutionists in the habit of our minds, even when we are not aware of it. "Great scientific discoveries," says a very orthodox theologian, "are not merely new facts to be assimilated; they involve new ways of looking at things. And this has been primarily the case with the law of evolution, which, once observed, has rapidly extended to every department of thought and inquiry, and altered our attitude towards all knowledge. Organisms, nations, languages, institutions, customs, creeds, have all come to be regarded in the light of their development. We feel that to understand what a thing really is, we must examine how it came to be. Evolution is in the air. It is the category of the age: a 'zeitis temporis,' a necessary consequence of our wider field of comparison. We cannot place ourselves outside it, or limit the scope of its operation."[1]

The question about evolution which has been most hotly disputed respects not the fact, but the mode. Mr. Darwin undertook to show us not only that it is in progress, but how it goes forward,

[1] J. R. Illingworth, in *Lux Mundi*, p. 101.

what is the law of its operation. His theory of natural selection, which I cannot now stop to explain, has been challenged by many naturalists. Undoubtedly it explains much; but it does not explain everything. And when the scientific people undertake to tell us what it is that has wrought all these wonders, and precisely how it works, they sometimes get beyond their depth. There is very likely to be more in earth, as well as in heaven, than their philosophy finds room for. They do not succeed in explaining the beginnings of things; the wisest of them do not try. Mr. Darwin assumes that life was here, in the world, in its most simple forms, at the beginning; he assumes that the Creator breathed life into these forms; he only tries to show how the life thus originated has been variously modified. Respecting this process there is much that we do not know. But one or two things seem to be evident.

The first is that these original germs, out of which so much has come, must have been endowed with wonderful potencies and powers. When we see what a marvel of majesty and beauty can come forth from the minute germ of the acorn or the maple seed, we get a slight impression of the potentialities of life. The evolution reveals the miracle of the involution. Creation is far more wonderful when we think of all this manifold life of the world as having been originally packed away in a few simple forms, to be drawn forth thence in the slow progress of the ages, than when we imagine each of

the forms we know as having been hidden into existence by an infinite fiat.

But there is something more in this process than the potentialities that the germs contain. The forces of life are there in the germs; but all theories of evolution agree that the changes which take place in them are largely influenced by *the environment*. (It is what surrounds them—growing things and acts upon them that largely shapes their development.) It is this feature of the evolutionary process which has been regarded, I suppose, as especially materialistic and dangerous. If the action and reaction of the environment upon the life accounted for nearly everything, there seemed to be little room left for a controlling purpose. But a deeper thought disposes of this misgiving. What is this environment? What is the one word that describes this all encompassing power which engirdles every living thing? We say that it is Nature, but it is truer to say that it is God. (It is a natural world, in every force of which God is immanent.) He who endowed these germs with their marvelous potencies surrounds them also with an environment in every part of which He is always present. (It is this idea of an immanent God which makes the doctrine of evolution not only rational, but sublimely religious.) And it is modern science which has forced upon us this conception.)" "The one absolutely impossible conception of God in the present day," says a modern theologian, "is that which represents Him

as an occasional visitor. Science had pushed the deist's God farther and farther away, and at the moment when it seemed that He would be thrust out altogether, Darwinism appeared, and, under the disguise of a foe, did the work of a friend. It has conferred upon philosophy and religion an inestimable benefit by showing us that we must choose between two alternatives. Either God is everywhere present in nature, or He is nowhere. He cannot be here and not there. He cannot delegate his power to demigods called 'second causes.' In nature everything must be his work or nothing. We must frankly return to the Christian view of direct divine agency, the immanence of divine power in nature from end to end, the belief in a God in whom not only we, but all things have their being, or we must banish Him altogether. It seems as if, in the providence of God, the mission of modern science was to bring home to our unmetaphysical souls of thinking the great truth of the divine immanence in creation which is not less essential to the Christian idea of God than to a philosophical view of nature.[1]

Consider those facts. Modern science has made it impossible to think of the universe except as a revelation of intelligence. Its fundamental assumption is, that underlying everything, at the foundation of all existences, is thought, is reason. Modern science does not know how life began, but it shows us life developing from a few pri-

[1] *Law Mundi*, pp. 97, 98.

mary germs, into the order and beauty and grandeur of this marvelous world. Who stocked these germs with such miraculous powers, who packed into them the potencies that have unfolded into the life that now fills forest and field and air and ocean, that builds our houses and throngs our cities, science does not try to tell; it puts the mighty fact before us and leaves us to interpret it.

But when science tells us that these living things have been shaped and fashioned in their growth by their environment, we cannot help pausing to think what that Environment is; and if the doctrine of the divine omnipresence is true, we certainly would not wish to deny what science affirms. If surrounding every one of these growing lives there is an Environment, in every atom, in every force of which the mighty God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, resides and works, and if all these changes are the results of the direct action of his wisdom and his power, the doctrine of evolution is a most impressive demonstration of the presence of God in the world. Let me close with a word of John Fiske, who is, perhaps, the most intelligent American expounder of this theory :—

"The doctrine of Evolution, which affects our thought about all things, brings before us with vividness the conception of an ever-present God, not an absentee God, who once manufactured a cosmic machine capable of running itself except for a little jog or poke here and there in the shape of a special providences. The doctrine of Evolution

destroys the conception of the world as a machine. It makes God our constant refuge and support, and Nature his true revelation; and when all its religious implications shall have been set forth, it will be seen to be the most potent ally that Christianity has ever had in elevating mankind."

III

WHAT IS THE SUPERNATURAL?

The chief stumbling-block of reason in these days is found in the conception of the supernatural. If that could be got rid of, the way of belief would be made smooth for many feet.

The researches of science have succeeded in establishing on so firm a foundation the doctrine of the universality and immutability of law, that there seems to be no room left in the universe for the supernatural or the miraculous. A writer in the "Westminster Review," several years ago, used this language: "Anti-supernaturalism is the final, irreversible sentence of scientific philosophy, and the real dogmatist and hypothesis-maker is the theologian. That the world is governed by fixed laws is the first article in the creed of science, and to disbelieve whatever is at variance with those uniform laws, whatever contradicts a complete induction, is an imperative intellectual duty. A particular miracle is credible to him alone who already believes in supernatural agency. Its credibility rests on an assumption, the assumption of such agency. But our most comprehensive scientific experience has detected no such agency. There

is no miracle in nature; there is no evidence of any miracle-working agency in nature; there is no fact in nature to justify the expectation of miracle."[1]

Special attention may be called to this manifesto as a good sample of what modern science is not. Modern science does not make dogmatic statements of this kind. It does not say of any proposition, "This is the final, irreversible sentence of scientific philosophy." It only says, So far as the facts have been collected and compared they bear this interpretation. To assume that no more facts can be collected, that no new light can be thrown upon the subject, that the case is forever closed, is in the last degree unscientific. With John Robinson, of Leyden, the pastor of the church that landed on Plymouth Rock, science always expects more light to break forth from God's works as well as from God's word, and is always ready to welcome it. There is considerable of this kind of dogmatism—sometimes, as in this case, outspoken, sometimes latent and implicit—in the utterances of men who speak as the oracles of science. There is far less of it than there was twenty years ago, for the fact is plainer than once it was that the scientific spirit is a spirit of reverence; but whenever we fall in with it we ought to remember that men who talk in this dogmatic tone are not, in any true sense of the word, scientific men; the spirit

[1] Quoted by James Freeman Clarke, in *Orthodoxy: its Truths and Errors*, p. 81.

which speaks through their lips is the spirit of the old theology, masquerading in the garb of science.

Disputes of this character arise largely, however, from a failure to agree upon definitions. What is the supernatural? What is a miracle? If these preliminary questions can be satisfactorily answered, many of the debates will come to an end at once. Not all of them, but many of them. For there are radical differences of theory; there are theologians on the one side and philosophers on the other with whom I cannot agree, and who certainly cannot agree with one another. The more clearly their several views are expressed, the more irreconcilable will seem to be their antagonism. Is it not possible to do away with all differences of opinion. But the number of differences would be considerably reduced if the contending parties would agree upon their definitions.

"That the world is governed by fixed laws," says the authority I have quoted, "is the first article in the creed of science." What is meant by fixed laws? Is it meant that everything which is now taking place has always been taking place and will always continue to take place? That is not true. The sun is rising and setting now every twenty-four hours; but it has not always been rising and setting, and nobody can prove that it will always rise and set. Indeed, no careful student of astronomy pretends to believe that it always will. "What is the history of Nature," asks Professor Fisher, "but a record of perpetual changes, — new

beings, new phenomena, and new collocations of phenomena presenting themselves on the scene? To this extent, our expectation that the future will be like the past is subject to qualification."[1]

It is true that we do expect that the same antecedents will be followed by the same consequents. We believe that water will solidify next year as it does this year at 32° Fahrenheit, and that it will become vapor at our altitude at 212°. We believe that the specific gravity of silver will continue, through the centuries, to be greater than that of aluminium. But this is, in truth, not knowledge; it is faith, — what Professor Huxley calls "the great act of faith," that every student of science is compelled to exercise, and on which all his investigations are founded. He *believes* that like antecedents will be followed by like consequents. He *believes* in a reign of law. That these laws are so fixed that they can never be altered is, however, a piece of dogmatism upon which he does not venture.

Of one thing, however, the student of science feels very sure, and that is that there is a reason for everything; that there is no process and no event which cannot be rationally explained. The universe is reasonable — this is the foundation of science. But this is a very different thing from saying that all which takes place in the world is the product of an unalterable mechanism. The acts of a wise man are rational and can be ration-

[1] *Faith and Rationalism*, p. 138.

ally explained; it does not follow that he is a mere machine, and can never act in any other way than the way in which he does act. When Mr. Huxley says that "the program of science has in all ages meant and now means more than ever the extension of the province of what we call matter and causation, and the concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity,"[1] he makes a statement which probably expresses the bent of his own mind, but which does not express the real tendencies of scientific thought in these latter days. The truth is that there is just now a strong movement of mind toward the recognition of the fact that the spiritual side of life is quite as well worth study as the physical side.

With these preliminary cautions against an antitheological bias which is not any more rational or scientific than the theological bias of the churchmen, let us come directly to the questions before us.

What, then, is a miracle? The common notion is that it is a violation of or a deviation from the laws of nature. Here is the law of gravitation. Some force, whose nature we do not at all understand, but whose action we can measure, pulls this book which I hold in my hand downward toward the centre of the earth. If the action of this force should be interrupted or suspended, so that the book had no weight, but remained motionless in

[1] Quoted by Bascom in *The New Theology*, p. 65.

the air, with no support under it, and no other natural force counteracting the force of gravitation, that would be a miracle. But this definition of a 'miracle is not biblical'; we are not told in the Bible that natural laws are ever violated or suspended. The biblical term for miracle is either "wonder" or "sign." The events called miracles are described as wonderful works, and as signs which indicate the presence of God. But many things are wonderful which are not unnatural. They are wonderful to us because they are unusual, or because we do not understand the mode of their operation. They may be a sign to us of the presence of some one with knowledge or power that we do not possess. The old church fathers explained miracles as being in harmony with nature, not as violations of nature. Origen assumed the existence in nature of a higher, ideal, divine order of which the miracle was the expression. And Augustine says expressly that "a miracle is not contrary to nature, but to what we know of nature." Augustine conceives of nature as wholly under the control of God, and argues that "whatever is done by Him who appoints all natural order and measure and proportion must be natural in every case."

There may be elements and forces in nature with which we are not familiar. Nothing is much nearer to us than the air we breathe, and the physicists have very confidently assumed that they knew all about it; it contained so much oxygen

and so much nitrogen, with infinitesimal amounts of carbon dioxid, ammonia, ozone, and organic matter; but recently a new substance, never before heard of or dreamed of, has been detected in the air; "argon," the chemists call it. Just what it is good for nobody seems to know; it seems to be a kind of sleeping partner, the unemployed contingent in the atmospheric society. That is the meaning of the Greek name they have given it, *argon*,—the idler. It is quite possible that the chemists have wronged him, and that we shall yet find out that he is a very busy fellow after all. I summon him here, however, only in support of my contention that we may have a great deal yet to learn about the most common elements and forces; and that much which seems to us miraculous may be only the employment of unfamiliar powers.

Many of the things that are the merest commonplaces to us would seem miracles to a South Sea Islander. Those people from Dahomey in the Midway Plaisance at the Columbian Exposition were seeing wonders and signs every day of their stay in this country.

Not only by our knowledge of natural forces do we learn to perform mighty works which appear miraculous to those of lower intelligence, there seems also to be a degree of power which the mind exerts over the body, a supremacy of the intellectual or the spiritual over the material, to which men are capable of attaining, and by means of which many wonderful things are done. The power of

the mind to influence bodily conditions is very great, and the contagion of courage and hope and determination can be communicated from one mind to another. Indeed, I am not at all sure that health, abounding vitality, is not in some degree contagious. It seems to me that virtue does sometimes go out of a thoroughly healthy nurse into the body of an enfeebled patient. That there is such a thing as a physical communication of vigor may be, and I fancy will be, proved any day we bring about the investigation of the mind of the patient. But these experiences, concerning which there will be no dispute, may throw some light on what are called miracles of healing. That one who was perfectly whole, in body and in mind, and whose sympathetic identification with his fellowmen was also perfect, might heal various diseases, by the mere intention of his own life, I can easily believe. That Jesus Christ was able to do such work as this does not seem to me, in view of what I believe him to have been, an incredible thing. It is what we might expect him to do. But this kind of work was not done by any violation of nature; it was done by the completion and perfection of nature; it was the realization of that word of his which every day gathers larger meaning, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."

I can say all this without crediting the preposterous theories of Christian Science or the fairy tales of faith cure. These stories generally bear upon their face the marks of absurdity. Such

powers will never be exercised, except by people who are elevated physically, mentally, and spiritually to a very high estate of being; and such people will not be vaunting these powers, or advertising themselves in the newspapers, or turning their exceptional gifts into a means of revenue; and when they open their mouths to speak to us they will have something to say that is not the quintessence of absurdity.

To miracles, then, considered simply as wonderful works, as the action upon nature of higher intelligences, or as the employment of agencies or laws with which we are not familiar, there can be no scientific or philosophical objection. The man who says, "There can be no intelligence possessing a knowledge of natures that I do not possess," or, "There can be no natural laws or processes with which I am not familiar," does not speak with the humility of science.

But the idea of the supernatural, it is objected, contradicts the fundamental assumptions of science, and therefore there is an overwhelming presumption against it. Dr. Bascom, who does not sympathize with this objection, has nevertheless stated it very clearly:—

"The scientific tendency, later in its development, leads us to magnify the natural, and, in its extreme expression, to exclude with it the supernatural. The terms of exact knowledge lie chiefly in physical things and events, bound together as causes and effects. The extension of these rela-

tions is the expansion of determinate thought, and all the successes of the past century urge us to complete the work by giving full sweep to the ruling idea. This movement has for the moment gathered great momentum, and those who wish to put any restraints upon it, or supplement it by earlier forms of inquiry, are easily pushed aside, or looked upon as having scant claims even to this courtesy.

"While there have been many secondary points of discussion between religion and science, points at which science has been more frequently in the right, the real difficulty of reconciliation between the two methods of thought is found in this very thing, the supernatural. Science has an instinctive dread of further supernatural, as something whose presence its own methods are of no avail, something from whose presence there goes forth an obscuring, chilling mist of uncertainty, that brings inquiry speedily to an end. The supernatural, instead of being an essential term in a higher order, is felt to be a loss of all order in chaos and confusion. The controversy, therefore, between science and religion, our knowledge of the physical world and our knowledge of the spiritual world, can only be settled by a just definition of the natural and the supernatural, and by a determination of their dependence on each other."[1]

"What then is meant by the natural? The term describes, in the first place, all objects, events, pro-

[1] *The New Theology*, pp. 75, 76.

cesses, phenomena, which are related to each other as causes and effects. "It covers," says Dr. Bascom, "all things and events which are interlocked by causal relations, — phenomena that are settled in their form and order of procedure. Every purely physical occurrence is completely conditioned by coexistent and antecedent circumstances, and it is these fixed dependencies which constitute its nature. However variable this nature may seem to be, the appearance is deceptive, for all results are perfectly defined by the energies involved." This is the common signification of the natural, as contrasted with the supernatural. It describes all those forces which are covered by the law of the conservation of energy. The natural realm, as the scientific mind conceives it, is the realm that is governed by laws. These laws are not all physical; there are certain laws of mind, also; laws of association, laws of resemblance, laws of thought. It is not much to say that these mental laws are all fixed and invariable. But there is, beyond all question, a certain order in our thinking; and we can often discover the genesis of our thoughts. Some of the operations of the mind, as well as those of the body and of the physical world, come under the control of law.

But is it true that everything that happens in this world is the outcome of these unchangeable laws? When we say that the world is governed by fixed laws, do we mean that these laws explain

every event that takes place? If we do mean any such thing as that, we are talking nonsense. I will show you, now, an event that cannot be explained by reference to any natural laws. Here is an electric light by my side upon this desk. It is burning now; the process is going on under natural law,—a law which I will not stop to explain. It is sufficient to say that whenever you have the same conditions which are present here, the same wires, the same carbon filaments, the same adjustments, the same electric currents, you will have the same light. So far, the whole process is under fixed law. But is there any fixed law which determines just how long this light is going to burn, and just when it is going to stop burning? No, there is not. I think that it will stop burning now within a very few seconds; but no law is going to stop it. I am going to stop it. There! What natural law was it that determined when that lamp should cease to glow? It was my free will that put it out. I might have put it out several seconds sooner, or several seconds later, or I might have chosen not to put it out at all. Now I propose to light it again. If everything which happens in this world is controlled by fixed, unchangeable laws, then the moment at which I shall light it is fixed, and can be predicted by one who knows all the forces at work. Is there any scientist in the universe, scientist in this universe, no matter how much he knows about electrical currents, and incandescent lamps, and nervous tissues, and mus-

cular contractions, who can predict the second at which that lamp will be lighted? I think not. It will be lighted when I get ready to light it. The work will all be done under fixed laws, under the laws of electricity, and the laws of muscular contraction, and the laws of the transmission of nervous energy from the brain to the fingers; the action of the lamp is under fixed law; the action of my body is under fixed law; but the power that sets these natural forces in operation, that starts the nerve currents in motion from my brain to my fingers, and that has moved the muscles of my fingers, and turns the switch and kindles the light, is the power of a free personality which acts upon this chain of natural causation, initiating new movements, making new combinations, bringing to pass many things which these fixed laws of themselves would never compass. It was a supernatural power which extinguished and relighted that lamp. Every free personality is a supernatural power. It is not under fixed law. It is over fixed law, and uses fixed law, in myriads of ways, to accomplish its own intelligent purposes.

Thought is a supernatural process. There are trains of ideas passing through my mind, by the laws of association; but I can command this procession to halt; I can take one of these ideas, and fasten my attention upon it, and think of it as long as I will, and then dismiss it, and call another. The perfectly healthy mind has power over its own trains of thought; it is only the enfeebled or

discussed mind that is dominated by fancies which it cannot dismiss. The power of thinking is the power of a free personality which is not driven by mental visions, but marshals and combines them in an order of its own choosing.[1]

It is involved also in what has been said that choice is a supernatural act. The very word implies this. Choice which was governed by fixed law would be a contradiction in terms. In the *continuation* of his choices, man often finds himself unable to counteract natural laws, but the choices themselves are supernatural. "Having, then, freedom and the power of causation," says Dr. Mark Hopkins, "there is a sense in which man *is the image of God as a creator.*" Thus a being than free, that is, the power of causation, and with intelligence, in the midst of a fixed order of things, so that he can foreknow what the consequences of his acts will be, and it is plain that he can purposely create or cause to be a future that, before him, would not have been. A feeble as is this image of the creative power of God, it yet indicates for man a place in this universe higher than that of suns and stars. He is not wholly as the driftwood on the stream or the atom in the whirlwind, atom though he be, but he has a will that goes for something in that which is to be.

Love in its highest manifestations is supernatural. The love which came to us under fixed law we should not highly value. The kindness

[1] *The Scriptural Idea of God*, p. 73.

that is constrained, the devotion that is compulsory, are not the expressions of love. Love is, indeed, the fulfilling of law; but when all law is fulfilled, its impulse is not exhausted, it is still able to do exceeding abundantly above all that law can ask or think. Its very characteristic is that it knows no limits or definitions. Space and time do not condition it; its range is boundless, its life is eternal.

These are the attributes of a free personality,—thought, choice, love. Wherever you find these, you find something that is not under fixed law; it is simply absurd to think of any of them as under the dominion of fixed law. In your own soul are thought and choice and love. You cannot, without stultifying yourself, say that you do not believe in the supernatural. You yourself are a supernatural being; every hour of your life you are employing supernatural powers.

This search of man for the supernatural, and his skepticism concerning it, is much like the search of the fishes for the sea and of the birds for the air: the supernatural is the very element in which his manhood lives and moves and has its being; the spirit that exists in the image of God the creator of the universe could hardly be other than supernatural.

We find very few persons in these days who are ready to confess themselves atheists, though we find many who are troubled with doubts about the supernatural. Some devout and reverent minds

confess to such uncertainties. Might I address to such persons one or two simple questions? You believe in God. Is not God supernatural? Has the Author of the universe no power over the universe? Is He imprisoned in the order which He has himself established? Can you conceive of Him as no more than the personification of Fate? You know that you have a free personality? If He is unfree, is not the creature possessed of attributes nobler than the Creator? It seems to me that we, as free moral beings, would stultify ourselves if we tried to worship a being who was not himself a free personality.

That God is a supernatural Power will hardly be questioned, I dare say, by any of us. But we say, in the last chapter, that God is immanent in nature. "God dwelleth within all things, and without all things, above all things, and beneath all things," said Gregory the Great. "The immediate operation of the Creator is closer to every thing than the operation of any secondary cause," said Thomas Aquinas. The doctrine of the immanence of God is no new-fangled notion; it has been held by great thinkers in all the ages. Now if this supernatural Power — this Being who, in the words of Athanasius, "contains all things, but is contained by none" — is present in every atom and every force of the whole creation, then Nature herself, in her inmost being, in the deepest secrets of her life, is supernatural.

"Below the realm of mechanical necessity," says

Professor Bowne, "there is a realm of ends which condition and control that necessity. (Here nature is finite.) Here are the roots of nature. Here nature appears, not as an independent something, but as a flowing forth of divine energy. It has no laws of its own which oppose a bar to the divine purpose, but all its laws and all its ongoings are but the expression of that purpose. . . . Nature is no independent power over against God, which must first be conquered before it can be modified; it is simply the divine purpose flowing forth into realisation. The constancy of nature, also, must be viewed as founded not in some mysterious necessity, but solely in the constancy of the divine purpose. We do not, then, regard the supernatural in its ordinary workings as breaking through phenomenal laws, or through the chain of mechanical necessity which is supposed to rule in nature; but we regard it as founding and maintaining that necessity by which the phenomenal order is realised. . . . We teach no breaks in the phenomenal order, or in the mechanism of nature, but rather that that mechanism, in all its phases, is plant to the divine purpose, and is but an expression of the divine purpose."[1]

No mere analogy can set forth the truth of the relation of the Creator to the creation: but the relation of the mind to the body may give us some dim suggestion of what it may be. My mind resides in and controls at every instant all parts of

[1] *Studies in Theism*, pp. 135-137.

my body, and is yet confined not within its members, but ranges free through space and time. So the divine Intelligence abides in and reveals itself through the whole of nature, and yet is not contained in nature, nor identified with it; for it is not only in all and through all, it is also over all. The immanent God is also the transcendent God. He is the Power that energizes nature, He is also the Father of our spirits.

It is not, then, in miracle that God is most clearly manifested. He comes closest to us in the deeper meanings of the commonest facts of our lives. If in the air we breathe, in the daily bread that nourishes our bodies, in the sunshine that warms us, in the blossoms that smile upon us, — not less, perhaps, in the frosts and blasts and rude resistances of nature that call out our energies and discipline our wills, He momently reveals himself to all who have the mind of the Spirit, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They have not far to look. For every day and everywhere —

> "The Lord is in his Holy Place,
> In all things near and far,
> Shekinah of the snowflake, He,
> And glory of the star,
> And secret of the April wind
> That stirs the field to flowers,
> Whose little tabernacles rise
> To hold him through the hours."

This discussion may have enabled us to see the truth of what Dr. Bascom has said: —

"The natural and the supernatural are different sides of the same thing, the earthward side and the heavenward side, the outer and the inner side. When we walk in the light of our intuitions and affections, we are most touched by a sense of the divine Presence; when we take counsel and put our hands to work shrewdly on the things about us, we are most impressed by law, by stubborn conditions, by the slowly yielding material into which human and divine thoughts transform themselves. God and man, if they are to meet in activity at all, and the overshadowing attributes of the one feed, without engulfing, the feeble faculties of the other, must find a middle term which shall be the hiding of the divine Presence on the one side, and the drawing out of human powers on the other side. Nature is such a middle term. God here meets us, makes terms with us, gives us our lessons, and assigns us our tasks."[1]

Let us meet Him here with docile minds, with reverent hearts; let us sit at his feet and listen to his words; let us take his yoke upon us and learn of Him; for his Spirit waits to guide us into all truth; and to know Him aright is life eternal.

[1] *The New Theology*, p. 90.

IV

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

We have a letter of Paul the Apostle to a young man in whom he was deeply interested, who had been his traveling companion and assistant in the ministry, and had shared with him the hardships and the harvests of his arduous campaigns, in which are these words: —

"Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."[1]

This is good counsel for young men in these days, and for those no longer young. In our hands, as in Timothy's, there are sacred writings which we have known from our infancy, and which are able, if we rightly use them, to make us wise unto salvation. The sacred writings which

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 14–17.

are familiar to us are not identical with those upon which Timothy had been brought up: we have some books that he had not, and it is probable that he had some about which we have not much knowledge, in which, at any rate, we have not been instructed. This very letter to Timothy, for example, which has been to us, all our lives, a sacred writing, was not so regarded, I dare say, by the young man who received it. It was just a letter to him from his great friend, Paul the Apostle; that he very highly valued it, there can be no doubt; that he received the words of Paul as one who was under divine guidance is altogether probable: but he did not imagine that this letter would by and by be bound up with those other sacred writings, long familiar to him, to become a part of a Bible for the human race. There is no evidence that these epistles of Paul, or any other of the New Testament writings, were regarded as sacred scriptures on their first appearance. They were carefully preserved by those who received them, and in the course of fifty or sixty years they had to be collected and were invested as possessing a sacred character; but the earliest Christian fathers do not refer to them; when they speak of sacred scriptures it is always to the Jewish scriptures that they are referring. It was of these Jewish scriptures, of course, that Paul is here speaking. Timothy could not have been instructed in the New Testament scriptures, for in his childhood not one of them was in existence;

and those of them that were in existence when Paul wrote this letter to him had not come to be considered as sacred writings.

But I said that Timothy probably had certain writings, regarded as sacred, which we have not. Undoubtedly Timothy possessed the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. It was this version which was chiefly used by our Lord and his apostles. We know this, because their quotations from the Old Testament are almost always taken directly from this Old Greek Bible. Out of fifteen direct quotations made by our Lord from the ancient writings, all but three are cited word for word from the Septuagint. Now this Septuagint contained, along with the books of our Old Testament, those other books which we have separated from it, under the title of the Apocrypha. There is evidence in the epistles that these writings were familiar to their authors, for there are quite a number of unmistakable allusions to them. Timothy had, then, less Bible than we have in one part, and more than we have in another. Since Timothy's day not a little has been added to the canon of sacred scripture, and not a little has been taken away, by Protestants, at least. But we must bear in mind that whatever Paul says, in this passage, about the sacred writings as a whole, must be interpreted as referring to the collection which Timothy had in his hands. Does Paul mean to say that these writings are all inspired of God, and therefore infallible? Does he make this state

ment concerning the story of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon, and Tobit, and the rest? Manifestly that would be putting upon his words a very doubtful construction. We shall be obliged in use his counsel to Timothy with some caution. What can he mean when he says, as the old version makes him say, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God"? The answer is that he does not say any such thing. The new version, from which I have quoted, correctly reports him. What he says is that *every scripture which is inspired of God* is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Instead of attributing inspiration to all those scriptures which Timothy had in his hands, he simply said that every inspired scripture was profitable reading. There is even a hint in these words that they are not of equal value; that the quality of inspiration may be lacking in some of them. When this text is quoted as a sweeping statement that the whole of the Old Testament is infallibly inspired, it is grossly misinterpreted. Explained in this way it proves, as we have seen, a great deal too much.

Nevertheless it is true that Paul does refer to the scriptures in Timothy's hands, and that he does strongly commend them to him as the sources of wisdom and inspiration. If Paul's language concerning them is much less sweeping and extravagant than it is generally supposed to be, it is still cordial and positive. It does not forbid us to use our common sense in judging these old scrip-

tures, but it does most earnestly counsel us to use them, and bids us expect to find in them the illumination of our thoughts and the invigoration of our manhood. They may not be infallible, but they are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

I wish that I could get from all readers of this chapter the same open-minded, sympathetic, reverent treatment of the Bible that Paul expected from Timothy. But in order that this may be, it is necessary that their minds should be cleared of misconceptions and illusions. The Bible as it is can "do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think;" but in order that it may render to us its highest and best service we must take it for what it is and not entertain any false notions about it. The old English theologian who is known to history as "the judicious Hooker" gives us this word of caution: "As incredible praises given to men do often abate and impair the credit of the deserved commendation, so we must likewise take great heed lest by attributing to Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which it hath abundantly to be less reverently esteemed."[1] Exaggerated and false ideas of the Bible are sure to breed infidelity in inquisitive and independent minds. When, by impartial investigation, men convince themselves that the Bible is not such a book as it has been represented to be, their natural

[1] Works, Book II., chap. viii. 7.

impulse is to regard it as a fraud and to cast it aside altogether. I think that this is the precise history of a very large proportion of those who have rejected Christianity. The sin and the crime of driving men from the doors of the church are to be charged very largely upon the religious teachers who, with the light of this decade blazing all around them, continue to make statements about the Bible which a very little careful study of the Bible itself will prove to be untrue.

In view of all this erroneous and highly mischievous teaching, it is necessary to begin by changing the ground. The first thing that we need to learn is what the Bible is not.

It is not an infallible book. Where men got the idea that it is infallible we may not be quite certain it is that they did not get it from the Bible itself. No such claim can be found anywhere upon the pages of the Bible. Not one of the writers asserts his own infallibility.

Probably the theory of inerrancy is founded on what is called an *a priori* argument. Men said: "The Bible is the Book of God—if God gives us a book, it must be infallible. That is to be assumed beforehand. For God is omniscient; He can make no mistakes, and therefore we know that He could permit no mistakes to find their way into his Book."

Now this way of determining beforehand what God will do is rather venturesome. A good many years ago, a certain very famous Bishop Butler,

who wrote a book that has since been famous, entitled "An Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature," gave us a very strong demonstration of the danger of reasoning in this way. For there were those in his day who were contending that a revelation from God must be universal,—that it could not be given to one tribe or nation, but must be bestowed upon all men alike; also that there could be in such a revelation nothing obscure or difficult of interpretation; that it must be plain to the apprehension of all men. And if you will stop to think about it you will at once see that you have precisely as much right to make these affirmations beforehand, as you have to say beforehand that the Bible as God's book must be infallible. It would appear to be reasonable to say that if God is the universal Father, He must give to all his children the same gifts of light and knowledge; and that if He sends them a message it will be a message which they can interpret without any uncertainty as to its meaning. And yet we know that the Bible,—our Bible,—was not given to all the tribes of earth, but only to one obscure people; and that it is not so clear in its meaning but that men find much difficulty in understanding it. But, as Bishop Butler goes on to show, we find exactly the same state of things existing in Nature and in Providence. We could just as well have argued beforehand that the universal Father would give all his children equal portions of natural light and

knowledge; and that the Book of Nature would be writ so plain that the unlearned could understand it at a glance. Nature is from God; might we not say that it must therefore be perfect in all its parts, and holy in all its works? This argument is, of course, addressed to devout men who believe that God is the author of nature. And I ask them whether the assumption that the Bible must be infallible because God is omniscient is not precisely equivalent to the assumption that nature must be flawless and sinless because God is all powerful and all benevolent? The truth is that the methods which the divine wisdom has adopted for the education of the world are not always such as we should have looked for. *His ways are not our ways.* And instead of determining beforehand that the Bible, because it is God's book, must be so and so, and then warping the words of the Bible to fit our preconceived theories, it is better for us to go directly to the Bible itself and find out what it is. If we discover in its pages errors and contradictions, that fact need no more convince us that it has not come from Him than the discovery of cruelty and misery in nature convinces us that it has not come from Him.

The truth is that the Bible is not only God's book, it is also man's book. A human element is mingled with the divine on every one of its pages. We have the treasure, as Paul says, in earthen vessels. The truth of God must be expressed in the words of men. So far as it is conveyed in

human language, it must be poured into the moulds which men have fashioned for it. It is needless to say that these moulds will often be found inadequate to contain the full divine idea. Any one can see that this must be so. The idea that the mind of God can be infallibly expressed in the words of men is on the face of it preposterous. There must be more or less of imperfection and incompleteness in such a revelation. It may be sufficient to show us, in a general way, the great truths that it is needful for us to know, but it cannot be literally or verbally infallible.

I will not stop long to point out the errors of the Bible. Let it be sufficient to say that the Bible is not scientifically infallible. "Thus, for example," says Professor Kirkpatrick, "the narrative of creation in the first chapter of Genesis, while it presents a most remarkable counterpart to the discoveries of science, cannot be said to tally precisely with the records written on the rocks, so far at any rate as they have been read at present." More than this can be said on both sides of the question. Not only does this record fail to tally precisely with our scientific knowledge, but several features of the narrative distinctly disagree with what we know of the origin of things. This on the one side. But on the other side it is true that these first chapters of Genesis give us the foundations of all our scientific knowledge; they teach us that the universe is one; they bring before us "one God, one law, one element;" they reveal to us the

supremacy of the Creator over the creation; they help us to see that creation is progressive; they show us man as the crown of the creation, — the whole finding its completion in Him; they give us the grand optimistic conception which is the motive power of modern progress, that all things are working together for good; that there is —

> "One far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

How much science is indebted, how much progress is indebted, to the presence in this first chapter of Genesis of these great constructive ideas, we shall probably never know, until we have the long leisure of eternity in which to study the philosophy of history. In the midst of certain misconceptions respecting geological and astronomical laws, these great spiritual and ethical facts stand out clear as the sunlight. I believe that this truth is God-given; that the reason why the men who wrote these words were so sublimely right in their treatment of these very highest themes was that God had come into their lives.

The Bible is not historically infallible. On the whole the history is veracious. The recent discoveries of old inscriptions in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon have wonderfully confirmed a great many of the historical statements of the Old Testament, but they have also contradicted a few of them and proved them to be inaccurate. What is much more conclusive, there are quite a number of instances in which the Bible contradicts itself,

statements in one book conflicting with statements in another book, and utterly refusing, after all the twisting and quibbling of the commentators, to be reconciled. There is no honest way of dealing with a good many of these discrepant statements but to admit that one or the other must be wrong.

There are also errors not a few which have crept into the text through the carelessness of copyists. Some pairs of Hebrew letters closely resemble each other; the scribe who mistook one for the other might change a word radically, and give to the sentence an entirely different turn. There are scores of such errors as these.

And there are other imperfections even more serious. As the divine thought must find expression in human words, so the divine goodness must find expression in human lives. The lives of men at best but imperfectly reflect the divine goodness. The moral natures of men are often so undeveloped that you cannot make them comprehend the righteousness and love of God. And therefore the revelation given by God to half savage men must needs be morally imperfect. They are given as much as they can receive, and as their natures are gradually purified and enlarged they are given more. Thus the revelation must needs be morally progressive; its early stages must contain commands or permissions that express a partial morality; men will be directed to do some things that their children's children, in later generations, would be forbidden to do. Jesus tells us that some of

the commandments and laws of the early Hebrews were given to them because of the hardness of their hearts; he himself quotes some of these old laws—prefaced, in the Old Testament scriptures, by a "Thus saith the Lord"—and distinctly sets them aside as no longer binding. Now we must never forget that if the Bible is a revelation at all it is a progressive revelation; and that the teaching which was adequate for the earlier stages is altogether inadequate to the moral needs of the present day.

Such are a few of the evidences that the treasure of divine revelation is conveyed to us in an earthen vessel; that the word of God is mediated through the minds and the lips of imperfect men. That Moses and Samuel and David and Jeremiah and James and John and Paul are imperfect men we know very well; they do not hide from us their imperfections; their misconceptions, their faults of character, are distinctly revealed to us; but they were men of God, messengers of God, every one of them; and they have something to say to us to which we ought to give diligent heed. We have not the slightest reason for supposing that the words which they wrote were any more infallible than their characters or their actions; but as there is not one of them to whom, if he were alive to-day, we would not confidently go for counsel respecting the good life, so there is not one of them whose written words are not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

But I can imagine that some one may be saying, "If all this is true, then the Bible is no more than any other book." No; that does not follow. Between the two statements, "literally and verbally infallible" and "no more than any other book," there is a long distance, and one can be far from the first without being anywhere near the second. It is the defect of a certain variety of untrained intellect, that it can think of only two statements which can be made about any question, the one of which shall be the exact antithesis of the other. Persons of this order of mind always instantly assume that if you are not a prohibitionist you must be a rumseller or in the secret pay of the rumsellers; that if you do not believe in the Westminster Confession you must be a blatant infidel; or that if you are not willing to engage in the persecution of Roman Catholics you are undoubtedly a Jesuit yourself. There is a vast amount of this kind of logic abroad in the world; it is the logic of a childish mind. I trust that most of those who are reading this are too well educated to be influenced by it. One may refuse to accept the traditional view of the Bible and still be very far from saying that it is no more to him than any other book.

Other books there are, the Bibles of other races, of which I could never speak but with the utmost respect. That God has revealed some portion of his truth to great teachers of other religions I do profoundly believe. "I cannot bring myself,"

says a distinguished Protestant theologian of England, — "I cannot bring myself, and there is nothing in the history of Christianity to compel me to bring myself, to divide religions absolutely into true and false." From the first days of Christian teaching down to our own, there has not been wanting a succession of men who have seen and rejoiced in the elements of good in creeds which we have not subscribed. Take a phenomenon like the Oracle at Delphi; take that most touching account which Plato gives of the *Imitation* of Socrates; take the teaching of Gautama (Buddha); analyze the character of Mahomet; shall we say that there is no spark of heaven in all these? Assuredly there are sparks from heaven; assuredly there are seeds of the divine word (σπερματικοὶ λόγοι); assuredly there were, as Justin Martyr recognized, 'Christians before Christ;' assuredly even now there are 'heathen who are not heathen,'—*'not my people'* who shall be called *'my people,'* and *'not beloved'* who shall be called *'beloved.'* I do not mean to forget these, nor to fail to thank God devoutly for all of his truth that He has made known to them. Nor do I hesitate to recognize the quality of inspiration in many great and good books of the present day. And yet to me the Bible is not like any other book: it stands in a class by itself, apart from and above all other books, worthy of a reverence and a love which I can give to no other book. There are more reasons than one why this is so; let me name one or two.

When I travel backward over the course of modern history, and trace to their source those ideas and those influences of our modern civilization which are most beautiful, most powerful, most benign, I find them leading me back to a great Character, a unique Personality, who was living in Palestine about nineteen hundred years ago. Philosophies as I will, make due account as I must of all the physical and the political forces that have been in motion through this period, it still remains true that the ideas and the sentiments and the sentiment which emanate directly from Jesus of Nazareth have had more to do with all that is best in modern history than all other forces put together. Do not take my word for this. Some of you know what Mr. Benjamin Kidd says about it, but I will not quote him. Let me call instead, as my witness, Mr. Bernard Bosanquet of Oxford, one of the keenest-witted men now living, and a man who is connected with the religious radicals of England. The address from which I shall quote was delivered before one of the Ethical Societies of London, a society which rejects the name of Christian:—

"It is true and cannot but be true, because the religion is the man, that Christianity was fitted to become and has become the definite and specific expression of the character of those races which down to the present day have been the history-making races of the world."

"The spirit of Christendom then—parodied by

its doctrines, but always animating its life — and the modern spirit are on the whole convertible terms: and when we speak of culture, humanity, civilisation, as indicating moral aims and duties, we use these terms in the sense practically defined for us by the mind of Christendom. . . . The spirit of Christendom is, on the one hand, the motor force of human progress, and on the other hand the fundamental impulse of the new departure at the time of the Christian era."[1]

The spirit of Christendom is, assuredly, the spirit of Christ. All that is most distinctive and most beneficent and most glorious in the life of the world to-day is vitally related to him.

Now here is a book that tells me all that I know about this Jesus of Nazareth, about his life, his teachings, his death; a book which shows me the streams of regenerating influence beginning to flow out, through the lives that he vitalised, from the little land of Palestine to the other nations; which reveals to me his star of empire taking its way westward, over the glad mountain tops of Syria and Asia Minor, through the classic lands of Greece, to the seven hills of the Eternal City, — a path of light that widens and glows through the centuries, and that shall shine more and more, till the earth shall be filled with his glory. And when I take up that Book which contains the record of this Life and study it carefully, I find that through all the earlier history which it records, through all

[1] *The Civilisation of Christendom*, pp. 71-73.

the crude and semi-savage periods of patriarchs and judges and the turbulent times of kings and prophets, there run converging lines of prophecy and promise which culminate in him. Certain it is that this Jesus is, more than any other, the central figure, the central force, of modern history. And here is the Book which tells me what I know about him. Is there any other book which has, which can have, for me a value to be compared with that which I must set upon this Book? It seems to me that no man can claim to be fairly intelligent who does not diligently study this Book and find out for himself what the ideas and the influences are which are regenerating the world.

But this Book has another and a deeper interest for me than that which is merely historical or scientific. It shows me the forces that are regenerating the world, but it tells me also some things that I greatly need to know about myself. The spirit that speaks through it bears witness to my spirit that I have many needs which things seen and temporal do not supply.

I need forgiveness. I have been disloyal to the impulses which summon me to seek the highest good, and I know that behind those impulses is Some One, to whom in spirit I am kindred, who has a right to command me. That sense of unworthiness is not easily placated; how can I find peace?

I need strength. The infirm will, the wavering

mind, are my constant bane and torment; how can I find power?

I need wisdom. The way of life is dim and devious; the questions that I must solve are perplexing: how shall I find the light?

I need hope and courage. Often I am sore bested; the foes are many; the helpers few and cowardly: my heart sinks within me; who will lift up my head?

I need comfort. Dark days come; great griefs lay their heavy hands upon me; voices that my heart stood still to hear are silent forever; I stand in the gathering mist alone and dumb; who will help me bear my burden? I need the assurance of life eternal. In my path, also, waits the Shadow feared of men. Not many days hence I shall meet him and I shall not say him nay. The realities of the life beyond — who can tell me about them?

These are, surely, the deepest needs of my life. Who can supply them? Where can I find the answer to all these questions? I believe that I find them answered in this Book more fully, more perfectly, more convincingly, than anywhere else in the world. I believe that He in whom the promise and the prophecy of this Book culminate, and who is called, and rightly called, the Prince of Life, and the Light of the World, has a clear and satisfying answer to give to all these questions. And if you and I go to the Book with these questions uppermost in our thought, not to cavil, nor to criticise, but waiting for peace and power and wisdom

and courage and comfort and promise of the life to come, with open mind receiving the influences it is fitted to impart, — we shall find, what countless millions have found, that it is able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

V

IS THERE A PERSONAL DEVIL?

THE question of this chapter would undoubtedly have been answered by any old Hebrew, of the days before the exile, by an emphatic negative. He knew of no such personality. Neither Abraham, nor Moses, nor Samuel, nor David, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor any of the earlier prophets had ever heard of such a potentate. We infer that he was unknown to all these worthies because none of them mentions him. Devil with the definite article, as signifying the Prince of Darkness, does not occur in the Old Testament. "Devils," in the plural, is found four times in the old version of the Hebrew scriptures. In two of these cases it is a palpable and ridiculous mistranslation; the new version properly renders the Hebrew word "he-goats." The reference is to the unlawful worship of that animal. In the other two cases the new version substitutes "demons," so that we may say that the word devil is not found in the new version of the Old Testament.

Satan, however, is mentioned in four places. In one of them, the one hundred and ninth Psalm, the new version substitutes "adversary." It is one of

those imprecatory psalms, in which the writer is wishing all sorts of harm to his enemy; and he hopes that he may be brought to a speedy trial with a wicked judge over him, and an adversary or accuser at his right hand. The Hebrew word Satan means adversary; and of course the psalmist's reference here is to some accusing man and not to any evil spirit.

In the twenty-first chapter of First Chronicles we are told that Satan provoked David to number Israel. In the Second Book of Samuel we have much earlier account of the same transaction, in which it is said that the Lord himself, being angry with Israel, instigated David to do this thing. The Book of the prophet Zechariah mentions Satan as an enemy or accuser of the good priest Joshua, and in the Book of Job he is also introduced as the accuser of the chief personage of that drama.

Respecting the Chronicles and the Book of Zechariah, we know that they were written after the exile; and it is not impossible that Job belongs to the same period. If we were sure of this, we should have a very clear account of the origin of the belief in Satan so far as the Hebrews are concerned. The fact being that no reference to such an evil potentate is found in any of the writings preceding the exile, and that the people among whom they were sojourning during the exile possessed a very highly developed religious faith, in which the existence of an evil deity was a cardinal doctrine, it seems clear that the Hebrews borrowed

from the Persians their belief in such a personage. It is probable, however, that some elements of a dark superstition did find entrance to their minds in the early days; and that those two references to demons, to which I have alluded, indicate their fear of some mysterious powers, inhabiting waste places, and threatening their peace. The monotheism of the old Hebrews was, however, of so positive a character, that no room was found in their minds for any rival deity, bad or good. The Satan of the Book of Job, whatever date we may give the book, is not the prince of a hostile dominion; he is one of the sons of God; apparently he is a sort of prosecuting attorney whose business it is to find out evil deeds and report them. Naturally he takes a pessimistic view of human character, but the view appears to be purely professional. The evil which he inflicts on Job is permitted by Jehovah, as a test of Job's integrity. There is nothing in the character of Satan as it appears in this book to suggest the gigantic and malignant personality of the later theology.

The Serpent which tempted Eve has been popularly identified with Satan or the devil, but there is not one word in the narrative which suggests any such thing. He is simply called a serpent; he is said to have been one of the beasts of the field, the most cunning of them all. The only scriptural warrant for the belief that the tempter of Eve was the devil, in the form of a serpent, is found in two places in the Apocalypse, when "that old Serpent,

the devil and Satan" is mentioned. No reference is made to Eve or her temptation; it is only by a doubtful inference that the Serpent of Eden can be identified with the one mentioned in the Apocalypse. And it is perfectly certain that the writer of the narrative in Genesis did not intend to describe, under the designation of the Serpent, any such personage as the later theology has created and named Apollyon or Beelzebub. That personage, I say, was not known nor imagined by any of the Hebrew prophets, kings, or lawgivers, before the Babylonian exile. But when the people came back from that exile they brought with them the germs of a demonology which mightily affected their after belief. Here we see some traces of that *aberglaube* whose invasion Matthew Arnold traces in the religion of Israel.

The Dualism of the Persians and the Medians which the Jews then borrowed would well repay careful study if I have time only to allude to it. Rawlinson tells us that the original Zoroastrianism, like the original form of the Jews' religion, was not dualistic. The Persians first believed in "a single great Intelligence, Ahuró-Mazdão, the highest object of adoration, the true Creator, preserver, and governor of the universe. This is its great glory. It sets before the soul a single Being as the source of all good and the proper object of the highest worship."[1] But the Persians began to try to account for the evils in the world; they let their

[1] *Five Great Monarchies*, iii. 96.

imagination work upon this problem. "They see," says Rawlinson, "everywhere a struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, purity and impurity; apparently they are blind to the evidence of harmony and agreement in the universe, discerning nothing anywhere but strife, conflict, antagonism. Nor is this all. They go a step further, and personify the two parties to the struggle. One is a 'white' or holy 'spirit,' and the other a dark spirit (*anyro-mainyus*). But this personification is merely poetical or metaphorical. The 'white spirit' is not Ahura-Mazda, and the 'dark spirit' is not a hostile intelligence. Both resolve themselves on examination into mere figures of speech, phantoms of poetic imagery, abstract notions, clothed by language with an apparent, not a real personality.

"It was natural that, as time went on, Dualism should develop itself out of the primitive Zoroastrianism. Language exercises a tyranny over thought, and abstractions in the ancient world were ever becoming concrete. The Iranian mind, moreover, had been struck, when it first turned to contemplate the world, with a certain antagonism; and, having once entered the track, it would be compelled to go on, and seek to discover the origin of the antagonism, the cause or causes to which it was to be ascribed. Evil seemed most easily accounted for by the supposition of an evil Person: and the continuance of an equal struggle, without advantage to either side, which was what the Ira-

nians thought they beheld in the world that lay around them, appeared to them to imply the equality of that evil Person with the Being whom they rightly regarded as the author of all good. Thus Dualism had its birth. The Iranians came to believe in the existence of two external and coequal persons, between whom there had been from all eternity a perpetual and never-ceasing conflict, and between whom the same conflict would continue to rage through all coming time.[1]

It was thus that the belief in Angro-Mainyus, or Ahriman,—the black spirit,—was developed among this ancient people. And the Persian theology thenceforward set these two potentates of good and evil over against each other in an eternal conflict. "Whatever good work Ahura-Mazda in his benevolence creates, Angro-Mainyus steps forward to mar and blast it. If Ahura-Mazda forms a 'delicious spot' in a world previously desert and uninhabitable, to become the first home of his favorites, Angro-Mainyus ruins it by sending into it a pestilence, and at the same time rendering the climate one of the bitterest severity. If Ahura-Mazda provides, instead of this blasted region, 'the second best of regions and countries,' Angro-Mainyus sends there the curse of murrain, fatal to all cattle. In every land which Ahura-Mazda creates for his worshipers, Angro-Mainyus immediately assigns some plague or other. War, ravages, sickness, fever, poverty, hail, earthquakes, buzzing

[1] *Five Great Monarchies*, iii. 395, 396.

insects, poisonous plants, unbelief, witchcraft, and other inexplicable sins are introduced by him into the various happy regions created without any such drawbacks by the good spirit; and a world which should have been 'very good' is by these means converted into a scene of trial and suffering."[1]

It is evident, now, I think, whence came the mighty Prince and Potentate of Evil who has had so large a part to play in later Jewish and Christian theologys. We have tracked him to his lair. The relation between these Persians and the Israelites, while the latter dwelt among them, was very close and sympathetic; the Israelites absorbed from them the idea of a Kingdom of Evil arrayed against the Kingdom of Jehovah, and it became a part of their system of belief. They modified it, however, very materially. Their Satan never became so powerful a personage as the Persian Angro-Mainyus. His dominion was always inferior and his power greatly limited. Yet he was able to do a great deal of mischief in the world: and they conceived of him as the sovereign of a bad realm, whose messengers and emissaries were always at work tormenting human beings and exercising their diabolical power in many injurious ways. Such was the common belief of the Jews when our Lord was on the earth. His relation to this belief we will consider a little later; we are only trying now to trace its historical development among the Jews. Having adopted this new Potentate into their pantheon, the Jewish

[1] *Fire Great Monarchies*, iii. 107, 108.

theologians had to account for him. Who was he, and how came he into this state of hostility to the good God? They finally made out that he was a fallen angel. There is not a word in the Old Testament or in the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles or the Epistles about this: the first hint of it, and it is very slight, is in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, where we read of a war in heaven between Michael and his angels, on the one hand, and the dragon, otherwise the old serpent, sometimes called the Devil and Satan, and his angels on the other; the result of which was the defeat of the dragon and his followers, who were cast out of heaven, and fell to the earth. This apocalyptical writing, whose language is confessedly highly symbolical, furnishes all the biography of the Devil that the Bible contains. The biblical materials for a history of the Devil are, it must be owned, extremely meagre. Not there would a student of apocryphal writings, appearing about this time, in which the information is more specific. And whatever may have been believed by the apostles concerning this Prince of Darkness, the early church soon began to develop the doctrine of the Devil, and it was not many centuries before an elaborate system of belief concerning him had been evolved from the imaginations of Christian teachers. "Holding firmly," says one authority, "to the belief of a Satanic Kingdom of darkness opposed to Christ's Kingdom of light, the majority of the early Christians ascribed all evil, physical as well as moral, to the

Devil and his demons,—failures of the crop, sterility, pestilence, murrain among cattle, mental malaise, persecutions of the Christians, individual woes, heresies, astrology, philosophy, and finally the whole body of heathenism, with its mythology and religious worship. The heathen gods were believed to be conquered by the work of Christ, but not to be wholly powerless; they sank down into demons, and so a part of their mythology passed into the doctrine of the Devil."

Thus the Satanic cult, if we may so describe it, was thoroughly planted in Christian theology. Strong tendencies appeared, like those of the Gnostics and the Manichæans, to a dualism as unqualified as that of the Parsees, in which the Kingdom of Evil was made coeternal with the Kingdom of God; but these tendencies were resisted; Satan was not admitted to be equal in power with the Lord God; his kingdom was not from everlasting to everlasting; defeat and final overthrow were in store for him; but for the present he was a tremendous fact, and a large part of the time and thought of the church was expended in resisting and subverting diabolic agencies. "The whole world," says Mr. Lecky, "was divided between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan. The persecuted church represented the first, the persecuting world the second. In every scoff that was directed against their creed, in every edict that menaced their persons, in every interest that opposed their progress, they perceived the direct and imme-

diate action of the Devil. They found a great and ancient religion subsisting around them. Its gorgeous rites, its traditions, its priests, and its mysteries had preoccupied the public mind, and presented what seemed at first an insuperable barrier to their mission. In this religion they saw the especial workmanship of the Devil, and their strong predisposition to interpret every event by a miraculous standard persuaded them that all its boasted prodigies were real. Nor did they find any difficulty in explaining them. The world they believed to be full of malignant demons who lived in all ages persecuted and deluded mankind."[1]

It is terrible to read of the extent to which, for many centuries, the thought of the church was pervaded by these conceptions of diabolic agency. A large share of natural phenomena was attributed to the Devil: he was supposed to assume the forms of all kinds of animals; the pig grunting at you by the roadside, the toad leaping across your path, the blackbird chattering at you from the thicket, the beetle booming into your room after the lamp was lighted, were very probably shapes of the Devil. All human forms, from the priest in his cassock to the gallant with his sword, from the wizened grandame to the blooming maiden, he could easily assume; any traveling companion who joined you in a solitary walk was very likely the Devil. All lonely places were haunted by him; even in the crowded streets he moved undetected, and in the

[1] *History of Rationalism in Europe*, chap. i.

homes of men he took up his abode. During several of the middle centuries, from the fifth to the twelfth, the sense of his presence was scarcely absent from the minds of the devout; but in that happy time, Mr. Lecky tells us, although there had never been a day "in which the sense of Satanic power was more profound and universal," the counteracting superstition, connected with the efficacy of certain magical rites, was also so strong that not much distress was felt on this account. "It was firmly believed that the arch-fiend was forever hovering about the Christian, but it was also believed that the sign of the cross, a few drops of holy water, or the name of Mary, could put him to an immediate and ignominious flight."[1] There was, however, ever then, a dark belief that all the terrible natural phenomena — earthquakes, thunderstorms, hailstorms, pestilences, famines — were produced by the Devil, even when the Pilgrim Fathers settled in Plymouth, they attributed the severe thunderstorms, to which they were unaccustomed, to the wrath of the Devil at their invasion of his territory. The Black Death which slew so many victims during the Middle Ages was universally believed to be a diabolic visitation.

Then it came to be believed that these disasters were often due to the intervention of men who had put themselves into the power of the Devil, and so arose the horrible belief in witchcraft and sorcery which for many generations came near to being

[1] *History of Rationalism in Europe*, chap. i.

a demoniac possession of those who believed it. Cruel and terrible was this superstition; in every community were those who were said to have sold themselves to the Devil, and to be his willing instruments of his malignity. This was let loose, all round the world, a truly hellish suspicion; any slight mental or nervous peculiarity exposed its possessor to this deadly accusation; personal jealousies and enmities seized upon this superstition for a weapon, and the fiery zeal of a religionism that had no doubt whatever of the reality and personalness of the Satanic kingdom found such a reign of terror that lasted for centuries. We often hear of the Salem witchcraft and its victims, and I dare say there are many who conceive that our New England ancestors were singular in their subjection to this craze. Doubtless we all regret that the men of Massachusetts Bay were not superior to this mania, but if they had been, they would have been wholly exceptional in their generation. In our colonies twenty-seven persons in all suffered death as witches; in Europe they were put to death by thousands. "The zeal of the executioner," says Mr. Lecky, "in stimulating the persecution, was unflagging. It was displayed alike in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Flanders, Sweden, England, Scotland, and Ireland. An old writer who cordially approved of the rigor tells us that in the Province of Como alone eight or ten inquisitors were constantly employed; and he adds that in one year the number of persons they condemned

amounted to a thousand, and that during several of the succeeding years the victims seldom fell below one hundred.[1] I must give you one more sketch from the pen of Professor Burr of Cornell University:—The Reformation for a little while distracted men's minds, but with its first lull, at the middle of the sixteenth century, the persecution burst forth with redoubled fury in all Christian lands, Catholic and Protestant alike, to rage for more than a century, and then smoulder to our own day. The figures given for the total number of its victims are merest guesswork, and those for many local persecutions are scarcely more reliable; but they are as likely to be below as above the truth. We have the names of hundreds who perished in single jurisdictions within the space of two or three years; and the records thus preserved are but chance fragments. A single Lorraine judge boasted of having scattered nine hundred; and he was still in the midst of his activity. If the persecution knew fiercer epidemics in Catholic countries it was more chronic in Protestant. Nor was it mainly old women who suffered. Scarcely might he accused first, but the witch was always tortured into naming her accomplices, and she generally named those whom she hated or envied. Riches, learning, beauty, goodness were often so many titles to death. 'There are still,' wrote the Chancellor of the Bishop of Würzburg to a friend in 1629, 'four hundred in the city, high and low, of

[1] *History of Rationalism in Europe*, chap. i.

every rank and sex, nay, even clerics, so strongly accused that they may be arrested at any hour. Some out of all offices and faculties must be executed: clerics, electoral counsellors and electors, city officials, court assessors, several of whom your Grace knows. There are law students to be arrested. The Prince-Bishop has over forty students who are soon to be pastors; among them children or fourteen are said to be witches. A few days ago a dean was arrested; two others who were summoned have fled. The notary of our church consistory, a very learned man, was yesterday arrested and put to the torture. In a word, a third part of the city is surely involved. The richest, most attractive, most prominent of the clergy are already executed. A week or a maiden of nineteen was put to death, of whom it is everywhere said that she was the fairest in the whole city, and was held by everybody a girl of singular modesty and purity. She will be followed by seven or eight others, of the best and most winsome. There are children of three and four years, to the number of three hundred, who are said to have had intercourse with the Devil. I have seen put to death children of seven, promising students of ten, twelve, fourteen, and fifteen. Of the nobler — but I cannot and must not write more of this misery. There are persons of yet higher rank whom you know and would marvel to hear of.' Such, to quote but a single document, was the scope of the witch persecution."[1]

[1] Johnson's *Cyclopædia*, art. "Witchcraft."

To the yoke of this horrible superstition all the greatest and best of mankind bent their necks. Luther's belief in the Devil and in witchcraft was unhesitating. As for the witches, he had no mercy on them. "Spare none of them," he cried; "I would burn them all." The question respecting the certainty of detecting them did not trouble his mind: it was easy enough, of course, to tell who was a witch and who was not. As to the existence of the Devil, Luther was just as certain as he was of his own existence. He had met him more than once, and had had lively conversations with him. "Early this morning," he writes in his diary, "when I awoke the fiend came and began disputing with me. 'Thou art a great sinner,' said he. I replied, 'Canst thou not tell me something new, Satan?'" It is evident that in repartee his Satanic Majesty was no match for Martin. Even when it came to lightning he was not to be beaten. One day as he was going to begin his studies he heard a noise which he at once explained as proceeding from the adversary, and he writes: "As I found he was about to begin again I gathered together my books and got into bed. Another time in the night I heard him above my cell walking in the cloister, but as I knew it was the Devil I paid no attention to him and went to sleep."

Do not imagine that it was the church and the clergy who were solely responsible for this superstition: the greatest jurists, publicists, scholars, statesmen all passionately defended it. "Thomas

Aquinas," says Lecky, "was probably the ablest writer of the thirteenth century, and he assures us that diseases and tempests are the direct acts of the Devil; that the Devil can transport men at his pleasure through the air, and that he can transform them into any shape. Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris and, as many think, the author of The Imitation," is justly regarded as one of the master intellects of his age; and he, too, wrote in defense of the belief. Bodin was unquestionably the most original political philosopher who had arisen since Machiavelli, and he devoted all his learning and acuteness to crushing the rising scepticism on the subject of witches."[1] The most cruel law for the punishment of witches passed by the English Parliament was enacted when Coke was attorney general and Bacon was a member of Parliament; the Commission which reported it included twelve Bishops. Sir Thomas Browne, one of the liberals of that day, and one of the most genial and cultivated gentlemen of history, wrote in the "Religio Medici," "I have ever believed and do now know that there are witches; they that deny them . . . are a sort, not of infidels, but of atheists." In 1664 two women were hung in Suffolk under a sentence of Sir Matthew Hale, whose charge to the jury declared that the reality of witchcraft could not be questioned; "for, first, the Scriptures had affirmed so much; and, secondly, the wisdom of all nations had pro-

[1] *Hist. Rationalism*, chap. i.

vided laws against such persons, which is an argument of their confidence of such a crime."

Such, then, is a most meagre sketch of the prevalence of the dark belief in the kingdom of Satan. The earth has been visited by few scourges more dire. The cruelty and perfidy, the malice and suspicion which it engendered, the destruction and misery which it caused, are almost too fearful for credence. If we know beliefs, as we know men, by their fruits,—and there is no other test,—this belief in Satan's kingdom must be adjudged to be most evil and accursed.

Can we say that it has disappeared from the Christian church? That would be too strong a statement. It is clear, however, that the places which it occupies in the thoughts of Christians is not what it was three hundred years ago. The belief in witchcraft has practically vanished from civilization. The last witch was burned in Scotland in 1722; and although, as late as 1773, "the divines of the Associated Presbytery" passed a resolution declaring their belief in witchcraft, and deploring the popular skepticism concerning it; and although John Wesley, a little more than one hundred years ago, said that those who doubted witchcraft were tainted with infidelity, and that if this belief was overthrown Christianity would go with it, it seems to be true that witchcraft is dead, and that Christianity is still very much alive.

Some sort of belief in a personal Devil is still common, I suppose, among Orthodox Christians.

It can hardly be said to be an article of faith: this it has never been. None of the three great creeds of the church — the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, or the Athanasian Creed — makes mention of the Devil; he is referred to incidentally, in some of the great Protestant confessions, but I do not remember that any of them have undertaken to define him, or to formulate any belief concerning him. The brief survey which we have given of the part that the belief has played in the history of the church enables us, however, to state, in general way, what the popular conception of Satan has been.

The Orthodox belief has regarded him as the sovereign of a vast, world-wide dominion of evil spirits, who are banded together, under him, to do his bad behests. These spirits and their great Prince have but one purpose, to hurt and harass and ruin man, body and soul. Their home is hell, but under the orders of their great Prince they are sent forth to range free through the earth, tempting human beings and seeking to draw them down to the place of eternal torment.

All these evil spirits have great power over nature, — power to work miracles, it would seem; to transport themselves instantaneously from place to place, and to assume manifold forms. But the prince of them all, the personal Devil, of the popular theology, must be practically omnipotent. He produces earthquakes, plagues, famines, hurricanes, eclipses; his miraculous control of natural forces is

practically unlimited. And he must also be omnipresent. At one and the same instant he is tempting men in every quarter of the globe; his diabolical intelligence is in immediate contact with the minds of men everywhere. I am sure that this is distinctly implied in the popular belief concerning him. Unless Satan is actually omnipresent, his influence over the minds of human beings cannot be what it is popularly supposed to be. If he can only be in one place at a time, and must pass, no matter with what rapidity, from one place to another in pursuit of his malignant purposes, it is but an infinitesimal fraction of any generation that he can by any possibility exert in the course of its life. That would not at all answer the popular demand upon him for "pernicious activity." Nothing less than omnipresence, and nothing less than omniscience, could possibly equip Satan for the kind of work which he is generally believed to be doing.

Do we believe in the existence of such a kingdom of evil, with such a potentate as this at the head of it?

Most of us will say at once that the belief once entertained in the power of the Devil over the forces of nature can no longer be justified: it is not, we shall all admit, credible that earthquakes and eclipses and pestilences are caused by him. We know something of the causes of these phenomena. But there are still a good many persons, I suppose, who believe him to possess a great

deal of power, and to be performing a great deal of mischief in the world in many mysterious ways.

To all such, let me suggest that these conceptions about him ought, if possible, to be less vague. If there is such a Prince of Evil, we ought to know more about him: we ought to be able to tell, more definitely, what is his power and what are his limitations. We do not want to be ascribing to him attributes that make him a deity scarcely subordinate to God himself, unless they really belong to him. And there is one esteem it important that belief in the existence of this Prince of Darkness should be maintained, are bound, I think, to tell us very definitely just how much we are to believe about him.

For my own part I am quite free to say that I do not believe in the existence of any such organised kingdom of evil spirits, ruled by a great Prince or Potentate, and set in deadly array against the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. If you mean by a personal Devil a gigantic evil intelligence whose sole purpose in the universe is the destruction of men's souls, and who commands vast armies of evil spirits in an age-long warfare upon human virtue and human happiness, then I say I do not believe in a personal Devil. The conception of such a personage, so far as this age is concerned, is largely taken from Paradise Lost. I suppose that the conceptions of Satan which prevail in our Protestant churches have nearly all been drawn from this source. It is well to remember

that Paradise Lost is a great work of the imagination. Milton's picture of this stupendous Prince of Darkness is not a good foundation of theological belief.

I do not believe in the existence of such a kingdom, with such a ruler, because it is morally and psychologically impossible that it should exist. Undiluted and absolute evil cannot organize itself into a kingdom. Its very principle is division and disintegration. Its essence is anarchy, for Sin is lawlessness. Even the gentle Lecky says that intellect that ever existed could not hold together for one week such an aggregation of absolute selfishness. Every one of his minions would be perpetually conspiring against him, and against all the rest.

What is more, the whole effect of evil upon the intellect is beautifully darkening. Selfishness weakens a man's mental grasp and narrows the range of vision. A politician who is nothing but a selfish schemer always becomes less astute as he grows older. He is morally sure, before he dies, to make some stupendous blunder which even a tyro would have avoided. The history of our politics furnishes many instances of such intellectual failure on the part of men who were known to be utterly selfish, but supposed to be preternaturally shrewd. If, then, Satan had been for so many centuries devoted to such pursuits as are ascribed to him, he would, unless God had set aside in his behalf the natural working of his own laws, have

been an absolute idiot long before this, and so would all his angels. If the Devil is one of God's creatures, the law under which he was created must be the law of love. That is the law of his being, the organic law of his spirit. His sin is only disobedience to that law. Disobedience to that law, in any part of this universe, brings after it, as the natural effect, intellectual as well as moral deterioration, weakness, — the diminution of being. The operation of that law absolutely forbids and makes impossible the existence of any such gigantic Prince of Darkness as Milton has painted. The Bible rightly calls the sinner the fool; and the longer he sins the greater fool he is. If there is a Devil, one who has sinned longer and more persistently than any other of God's creatures, he must be the greatest fool in the universe, and we need not be at all afraid of him.

In the second place I do not believe in the existence of such a gigantic world dominion of evil spirits with such a ruler, because I believe all that Jesus Christ has taught us to believe concerning the love of our Father. That the Infinite Power behind all law is infinite compassion and infinite helpfulness is the first article in my creed, and with this everything else must agree. If there is a good God, he has not let loose in the world such a mighty host of malignant spirits, with such a gigantic malefactor at the head of them, to prey upon the souls of his children.

In the third place I do not accept this theory,

because history shows us what horrible effects it produces in human society where it is generally and firmly believed. Restore the belief in Satan to the rank and importance that it held in the minds of men in the sixteenth century, and you will have all the atrocities of that dark day repeated. A belief cannot be true which works such devastation in the moral lives of men.

Is there, then, no sense in which we may use this word, so long upon trembling human lips? Is there no true conception to which we may properly or usefully apply this name? I There is, I answer, if only we do it intelligently. The word is one that I often use, and I think I know what I mean by it. Is is simply the aggregate spiritual wickedness of the world, personified. "Satan, or the devil, when in the singular," says Dr. Bushnell, "is not the name of any particular person, neither is it a personation of temptation or impersonal evil, as many think; for there is really no such thing as impersonal evil in the sense of mere evil; but the name is a name that generalizes bad persons or spirits, with their bad thoughts and characters, many in one. That there is any single one of them who, by distinction or preeminence, is called Satan or devil is wholly improbable. The name is one taken up by the imagination to designate or embody, in a conception the mind can most easily wield, the all or total of bad minds and powers."[1] The demon in the New Testament story

[1] *Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 135.

told the truth when he said, "My name is Legion, for we are many." Just so "Mammon" is personified in the Scriptures as a ruler of this world. It is materialism hypostatised. Just so "The Man of Sin" and "Antichrist" are personified in the New Testament and the personal pronouns are applied to them. Doubtless the terms describe no historical individual, but groups or assemblages of hostile minds and influences. Just so in the Book of Proverbs "Wisdom" is personified, and represented as a beautiful matron who seeks by her motherly influence to lead the children of men into the paths of life. Such personifications, by which abstract truths are put into concrete form and vast spiritual tendencies are grouped by the imagination under one symbolic term, are very useful in our common speech. To speak of the sum of moral evil in the universe as the Devil is a convenient and intelligible form of it. To this sense it is the Devil that tempts us, that ensnares us, that poisons our thoughts, that lies in wait for our souls. And it is well for us to gather up the evil of the world into one conception, and set ourselves sternly against the whole of it. Familiar and colloquial though our use of the term may be, symbolical though we know it is it is very significant. Thomas Carlyle was entertaining no superstitious ideas about a personal Devil, but he had a most clear and wholesome idea in his mind when he wrote to his brother John: "One has to learn the hard lesson of martyrdom, and that he has arrived in the earth not

to receive, but to give. Let him, then, be ready to spend and be spent for God's cause; let him, as he needs must, set his face like a flint against all dishonesty and indolence and puffery and mockery and malice and delusion wherever earth is full; and once for all flatly refuse to do the devil's work in this which is God's earth, let the issue be simply what it may. 'I must live, sir,' say many: to which I answer, 'No, sir, you need not live; if your body cannot be kept together without selling your soul, then let the body fall asunder and the soul be unsold.' In brief, Jack, defy the devil in all his figures, and spit upon him; he cannot hurt you."[1]

Doubtless the Devil, used in this sense, will have different meanings for different men; but to every man it means all the evil that assails him; all the influence that tend to undermine his integrity, to lower his standards, to poison his thoughts, to make him swerve from the path of manliness and purity.

Is it in this sense, you want to know, that the word devil is used in the New Testament? Sometimes it is, no doubt. For the Oriental mind personifies much more than does the Western mind. Nevertheless I do not question, as I have already said, that the people of Judea in the New Testament times — the majority of them — did believe in a great kingdom of evil spirits, with Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils, as its ruler. Jesus found this

[1] Froude's *Carlyle*, ii. 409.

conception in the minds of the people, and he did not antagonize it, but accommodated his teachings to it. At least this is the impression given by the synoptic narratives. Assuming that he is correctly reported, I find it difficult to explain all his relation to this question. The story of the temptation does not trouble me, for this is clearly an allegory. It is not likely that Jesus was literally carried through the air by the devil from the wilderness to Jerusalem and set upon a pinnacle of the temple; and it is not possible that he should have been taken to any literal mountain from the top of which all the kingdoms of the earth can be literally seen; for no such mountain exists, or could exist upon the earth. The transaction must have been purely spiritual. It is a dramatic description of a conflict in the spirit of Jesus, as the corporate self-lishness of the world presents itself to him in the three most universal and powerful forms of evil: the vanity, greed and ambition. There is no difficulty in understanding this narrative. But some of the reported words and deeds of Jesus in connection with this subject I do not readily understand. What he tells us, however, about the Father and his kingdom of righteousness and peace I do understand, and I build my faith on that. I know that this was the main thing that Jesus came to teach; I know that he came to show us the Father; I know that the God whom he reveals to us is the Good Shepherd, who follows the estray into the wilderness to bring him back, rejoicing more over

the sheep that was lost and found again than over the ninety and nine that went not astray: the prodigal's father, who meets the returning wanderer a long way off; the gracious Benefactor, who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust. Whatever conflicts with this conception of the heavenly Father and his kingdom on the earth, I can find no room for in my theology. If there seems to be in the teaching of Jesus himself an element which I cannot reconcile with this, I think that I honor him by passing it by and waiting for the time to come when I may understand him better. It is the spirit of Jesus, as I do firmly believe, — the spirit of Jesus abiding in the world, and gradually taking possession of it, — through our men, that is banishing this dreadful dogma from the earth. Many things against which he lifted up no word of protest, which he silently assumed, have been banished from among men by the power of his spirit. Slavery was here, in its worst form, before his very face; he never condemned it, but he created a moral atmosphere in which it could not live. Polygamy he never forbade, but he made it impossible. And though the demonology of his time was assumed by him, as was slavery and polygamy, he has brought into the world a conception of God and of his kingdom which, when once the world is able to receive it, will make an end of all this dismal doctrine. Perhaps it was a glimpse of this triumph over the Kingdom of Night that he

saw when he exclaimed: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." May God speed the day when all these spectral kingdoms of superstition and darkness shall disappear in the brightness of the glory of Him who comes to lead the world into the knowledge of God!

VI

WHAT DO WE INHERIT?

"What mean ye," is the protest of Jehovah by the mouth of the old prophet, "that ye use this proverb in the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion to use this proverb any more in Israel." It would have been well for the interests of a sound theology if no occasion had been found to use the proverb outside of Israel. For, in truth, the very substance of this proverb, which the prophet denounces as heathenish, has been wrought into theology in Hippo and in Heidelberg, in Geneva and in Dordrecht, in London and in Boston, and has mightily influenced the creeds and the prayers of many centuries. That the children's teeth are set on edge because the fathers have eaten sour grapes is a proverbial expression of the doctrine that sin is hereditary; that the guilt of ancestors is bequeathed to their descendants; that one generation may be justly punished for the misdeeds of former generations. This has been, since the days of Augustine, the orthodox doctrine, accepted by the great body of reli-

gious teachers, Protestant and Catholic. It has been stated variously; the manner in which this guilt is transmitted from generation to generation has been a subject of much controversy; but the great majority of Christian teachers have maintained that in some way the guilt of Adam's sin is transmitted to his descendants; that they are justly punishable for what he did. The Roman Catholic Church clearly teaches that we are punished for Adam's sin, but the punishment consists in the loss of original holiness, rather than in the infliction of suffering. However, the case stands so that every infant comes into the world under the curse pronounced on Adam, and liable at its first breath to be consigned to everlasting separation from God. Baptism implants in the soul of this child the germ of grace, so that if it dies after baptism it is saved. If, however, an infant dies before baptism, the Catholic Church gives us no reason to hope for the future blessedness. It will not, indeed, suffer the torments of hell; it is consigned to that limbus infantum, of which Dante tells us in the fourth canto of the Inferno. This is the abode of those of whom Virgil says: —

> "That they sinned not; and if they merit had,
> 'Tis not enough, because they had not baptism,
> Which is the portal of the Faith thou holdest.
> And if they were before Christianity,
> In the right manner they adored not God;
> And among such as these am I myself.
> For such defects and not for other guilt,
> Lost are we, and are only so far punished
> That without hope, we live on in desire."

Punishment enough, one would say, — through all eternity to cherish hopeless desires. This is the fate to which the orthodox Catholic theology still consigns unbaptized children. Much the same is true of High Anglicanism. So much emphasis is placed by that school upon the efficacy of sacraments, that the reception of baptism by the infant appears to be a clear condition of salvation. When the due performance of that rite has been omitted, the curse of the law appears to rest upon the little children.

With all the churches of the Puritans, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, there was no question about the inheritance of the curse pronounced on Adam. That was the foundation of orthodoxy. Our first parents "being the root of all mankind," says the Westminster Confession, "the guilt of their sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. . . . Every sin both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal."[1]

No statement can be clearer than this, that every infant comes into the world under the curse of Adam's sin. Nor is there, by this creed, any such

[1] *Westminster Confession*, chap. vi.

provision for cancelling this curse by baptism, as the Roman Catholic doctrine affords. The doctrine of election comes in here to assure us that elect infants will be saved, even if they are not baptized; and that non-elect infants will be damned, no matter how promptly we may baptize them.

This brief recital will indicate the extent to which this doctrine of the inheritance of sin has shaped theology. There have been, indeed, in all the ages those who protested against it; since the sixteenth century the Arminians, among whom Wesleyans and Methodists of all names are to be reckoned, have stoutly denied it; but it still remains true that up to this day the great majority of Christians, Catholic and Protestant, retain in their creeds the idea that the guilt of Adam's sin is bequeathed to his descendants.

That a great many of those who assent to these creeds have ceased to believe them, I have no doubt, but they still remain as the doctrinal symbols of the bodies holding them.

That such a belief could have intrenched itself in our theology and held sway over the minds of men for so many centuries is evidence of the rudimentary and unclear ethical conceptions prevailing in men's minds. The moral sense must be imperfectly developed which cannot see, on the least reflection, that guilt cannot be inherited. That I can be held responsible for the sins of my ancestors, and be deserving of punishment for what they have done, is a proposition that conflicts with the

foundations of morality. Guilt is absolutely personal; the word connotes moral responsibility for unlawful conduct; and moral responsibility belongs to individuals, and can no more be transferred from one to another than the act of breathing can be performed by one person for another, or the sensation of cold be experienced by one person for another. My child can no more be guilty or deserving of punishment for my sin than he can see with my eyes or feel with my nerves.

It is a little strange that the indignant protest of this old prophet was not offener heard in the days when this doctrine of imputation and inherited sin was taught and defended: "Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

This is the everlasting truth; and any theological dogma which conflicts with it is false and mischievous. The doctrines that hold us responsible for the sin of Adam, and deserving of punishment because of his offense, do not any longer command the credence of thoughtful men. If anybody professes to believe in inherited guilt, he at once makes it evident that he uses the word in a Pick-

wickian sense; he explains it all away so that it means something very different from what the term ordinarily conveys. Of this old doctrine of original sin, as taught and believed by our grandfathers, very little, thank God, is left. It was just what Ezekiel calls it, — a loathsome doctrine; it imputed to God the most monstrous injustice; to many ingenuous minds it was a grave impediment to faith.

But how about heredity, you are asking? Is there no truth in heredity? There is, I answer, a tremendous truth; and it is this with which our theologians have been fumbling. They saw the facts of heredity; they took the popular and poetic statements of the Scriptures concerning them, as scientific formulæ, and out of these made up their dogmas. But they read neither the facts nor the Scriptures correctly, and therefore their dogma became a horrible accusation against the divine justice.

What is heredity? "It is that biological law," answers Ribot, "by which all beings endowed with life tend to repeat themselves in their descendants; it is for the species what personal identity is for the individual. By it a groundwork remains unchanged amid incessant variation; by it Nature ever copies and imitates herself."[1] "It is that property of an organism," says Weismann,[2] "by which its peculiar nature is transmitted to its descendants." "Each child," says Dr. Bradford, "not only is related to the whole race as a species, but

[1] *Heredity*, p. 1.

[2] *Essays on Heredity*, p. 11.

is in a peculiar sense the offspring of individuals, bearing within him signs of his parentage, not only in his bodily organism, but also, with equal clearness, in his mental and spiritual constitution."[1]

The first great outstanding fact of heredity is the fact of species. We will not dispute about the definition of species: we all know that in all the world of living things "like produces like." Oaks grow from acorns and not from chestnuts; lions are the offspring of lions, eagles of eagles, fish of fish, insects of insects, human beings of human beings. Even the peculiarities are inherited; the child of pure Aryan parents never has the physical or mental peculiarities of the African or the Mongolian; the greyhound does not give birth to the mastiff nor the short horn to the Jersey, nor the Percheron to the Hambletonian.

More significant still is the transmission of personal and family traits. The physical resemblance of children to their parents is the common fact; often this resemblance is obvious to all observers; sometimes it is extremely subtle, consisting less of features by similitude than of evanescent shades of expression. In this case it is, however, mainly a matter of character. Family resemblances of this sort are often far more quickly observed by strangers than by kinsmen. Oftentimes a physical trait will be handed down for generations, like the aquiline nose of the Bourbons, or the "Batchelor eye" which Mr. Whittier inherited.

[1] *Heredity and Christian Problems*, p. 5.

Special mental traits and aptitudes are also frequently transmitted. Galton's investigations impressively show us this fact. Æschylus had eight kinsmen who were poets. Coleridge was the first of a literary line. Thomas Arnold of Rugby was the father of Matthew Arnold and the grandfather of Mrs. Humphry Ward. In music the illustrations are many. Says Dr. Bradford :—

"Andrea Amati was only the most illustrious member of a family of violinists at Cremona; Mozart's father was a violinist; Beethoven was the son of a tenor singer; and Mendelssohn was of a musical family. The Bachs supply perhaps the most distinguished instance of mental heredity on record. The family began in 1550, and lasted through eight generations to the year 1800. During a period of nearly two hundred years it produced a number of artists of the first rank. Its head was Veit Bach, a baker of Presburg, who used to seek relaxation from labor in music and song. He had two sons who commenced the unbroken line of musicians of the same name that, for nearly two centuries, may be said to have overrun Thuringia, Saxony, and Franconia. They were all organists or church singers. When they had become too numerous to live near each other, and the members of the family were scattered abroad, they resolved to meet once a year, on a stated day, with a view to keeping up a sort of patriarchal bond of union. This custom was continued until nearly the middle of the eighteenth

century, and very often there gathered together more than one hundred persons bearing the name of Bach, men, women, and children. In this family are mentioned twenty-nine eminent musicians."[1]

Doubtless in some of these cases the influence of environment as well as of heredity must be considered: a child who inherited no exceptional musical talent, but who was born into such a musical atmosphere and surrounded with such associations as those of the Bach family, would be likely to become a good musician. Nevertheless the fact of inheritance, in all these cases, is established beyond cavil. Intellectual tendencies and aptitudes are handed down from generation to generation.

There is a great dispute, just now, among the evolutionists, as to how much is transmitted. The new school of Darwinians, under the lead of Professor Weismann, maintain that *acquired* characteristics are not transmitted; that the parents may hand down to their children peculiarities which were theirs at birth, but do not bequeath any habits which they may have formed or any special qualities which they may have acquired. I cannot go into that discussion here; the principal facts of heredity with which I have to deal are admitted by both parties.

Are moral traits and qualities transmitted? Do our children inherit our virtues and our vices? This is the question which most deeply concerns us now.

[1] *Heredity and Christian Problems*, p. 39.

There seems to be plenty of evidence that tendencies to physical disease are transmitted. A child of consumptive parents is predisposed to consumption. Nervous disorders are still more likely to be inherited. One authority says that half the cases of insanity in France amongst the higher classes, and one third of those amongst the lower classes, have been inherited from parents or ancestors. The close connection between physical and moral disorders might indicate that if the former are inherited the latter also must be. But it is just here that we need to be very careful about our facts and our philosophy. Weak, disorder, infirmity, both of body and of mind, may be transmitted to offspring, and thus the children may be born with predispositions to vice and wrong-doing; but this involves no guilt nor demerit: the inheritors are in no wise responsible for what they have inherited; neither good men nor a just God can blame them for their misfortune; the vices of their parents or ancestors do not become theirs until by their own free consent and practice they make them theirs.

The question whether intemperance is inherited is discussed by the doctors. Some of them say that there is no such thing as inheriting an appetite; others, like one writer in the "Psychological Journal," tell us that "the most startling problem connected with intemperance is that not only does it affect the health, morals, and intelligence of the offspring of its votaries, but that they also inherit the fatal tendency and *feel a craving for the very*

beverages which have acted as poisons on their systems from the commencement of their being."[1] This inheritance of a specific appetite may or may not be common; but there is no doubt that the children of drunkards do inherit from their parents a neurotic diathesis which predisposes them to intemperance. The nerves and the stomach are in a condition which calls for some artificial stimulant, and thus the children are easily led into the slippery path by which their parents went down to doom. In the words of Ribot: "The passion known as dipsomania or alcoholism is so frequently transmitted that all are agreed in considering its heredity as the rule. Not, however, that the passion for drink is always transmitted in that identical form, for it often degenerates into mania, idiocy, and hallucination. Conversely, insanity in the parent may become alcoholism in the descendants."[2] Some such dreadful entail of morbid tendencies is almost sure to pass to the drunkard's children. Yet here is a fact which I have observed in the drunkard's children often live sober lives, while his children's children follow in his footsteps. This may be due to the fact that heredity sometimes skips a generation, but it is more probably the result of purely moral causes. The children of the drunkard suffer so bitterly from their father's fault that their grief and shame counteract the hereditary influence, and make them shun the fatal indulgence. Their

[1] Quoted by Elam, *A Physician's Problems*, p. 40.

[2] *Heredity*, p. 85.

children, inheriting the same tendency and having no such object lesson before their eyes, and no such moral influence deterring them, are drawn unawares into the ways of death.

Precisely as intemperance is transmitted, so also is pauperism and crime. The infirmities and tendencies out of which pauperism and crime naturally spring are transmitted by criminals and paupers to their offspring. That terrible little book of Dr. Dugdale's entitled "The Jukes," traces the progeny of one unhappy girl through several generations. It shows that of the 700 descendants of this woman whose cases were examined, 280 became paupers after reaching maturity. Only 22 of the 700 had acquired any property, and eight of these lost it all; 76 were known to have been convicted of crimes and punished, while as many more were undoubtedly following criminal courses. More than 52 per cent of the females of this line followed lives of shame, and twenty-three and a half per cent of the children were illegitimate. Blood tells; and no kind of blood has a more impressive story to tell than this kind.

The vices and excesses of people of this class, their irregular habits, and their imperfect alimentation result in transmitting to their progeny constitutions undervitalized and tending to still further degeneration. Children of such parentage easily become paupers. Indolence is constitutional with them. We hear of persons who were born tired; it is something more than a pleasantry. "If any law,"

says Dr. Bradford, "is well established, it is the law of heredity as manifested in the transmission of qualities and tendencies that lead to vice, pauperism, and crime. Indeed, much of pauperism is only one manifestation, and much of vice is largely the outcome of physical disease, the hereditary nature of which we have already discovered. A large proportion of the dangerous classes have received from a vicious ancestry qualities and tendencies which with their environment they are almost powerless to resist. That which is the heritage of intemperate and licentious parents, a weakened vital stock which almost destroys ambition and makes labor seem impossible, society denounces as laziness But we are always at first what others make us."

Such is a brief exhibit of some of the salient facts of heredity, facts that must deeply concern every one of us. For there is not one of us here who has not inherited some infirmities and tendencies to evil, who does not find in his nature some weakness or bias, for which he is indebted to those that lived ere he in his veins. And there are many among us who have thus come into the possession of a vast estate of evil tendency, whose disabilities and predispositions to vice and crime are a fearful load.

To say that they are to blame for this — that they are under the wrath and curse of God, on account of the misdoing of their parents or of any of their ancestors, from Adam down — is to say a horrible thing; it comes perilously near to blasphemy. They deserve, instead of wrath, the ten-

decrest pity of God and of all good men; and they do not fail to receive it. The Psalmist says that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Not only then that fear Him, but them that are farthest from Him; that are weakest and most depraved in nature; that come into life with the heaviest encumbrance of frailty and evil tendency. If there are any of his children whom the Heavenly Father loves better than the rest or more tenderly longs to help, they are these. Unless all that Jesus Christ has told us about the Heavenly Father is untrue, this is in his heart.

What shall we say, then, about this power of hereditary evil over the lives of men? Is it irresistible? That is a question in which some of us have a deep interest. Some of us are conscious that we are bearing about in our lives a bad legacy; its evil impulsions and its crippling restraints trouble us continually. That we are not to blame for what we have inherited, we know; we are only to blame for the added strength that we have given to these bad elements by yielding to them and cherishing them. But are we helpless under their impulse? Is it impossible for us to resist and overcome them?

Candidly, let me say, I do not think that we are helpless; I believe that it is possible for us to resist and overcome. And this faith of mine rests, first and last, on the one great fact which is fundamental in all my thinking, that there is a God, and

that his name is Love. If reason and goodness are the heart of the universe, then God has not permitted any evil force which we cannot overcome to get possession of your life or mine. It may take a hard battle, but there is nothing better for any man than a good fight. And if God is good He has not sent a foe against us that by his grace we may not conquer.

And this faith of mine is supported, too, by facts innumerable. I believe that men can resist and overcome the strongest influences of heredity because I have seen them do it, over and over again. I have seen scores and hundreds of men and women, with all sorts of bad blood in their veins, stand up against the inbred sin and fight it and conquer it, and win glorious manhood and womanhood in the struggle. That very fact of which we spoke a few moments since, that the children of drunken parents often resist hereditary tendencies while their children to whom the same influences are transmitted, in weaker form, succumb to them, shows what can be done when the moral nature is roused to resist the evil.

Two or three things any man can do, when he finds himself under such a burden.

First, he can wish and determine to get free from it. He can highly resolve that nothing that he can do to cast it off shall be left undone.

Second, he can put himself into associations and under influences which will help him in this fight. He can choose for himself a better environment.

And this brings in a fact of mighty import to which I can hardly do more than allude. Environment is certainly no less important a fact than heredity. The inherited tendencies within us are no more powerful in shaping our ends than are the circumstances and influences round about us. The best-born child, if brought up in the slums, is likely to be contaminated and ruined; the child that is born in the slums and is adopted in infancy into a perfect Christian home is likely to grow up into virtue. This is not always so; for we have seen fair flowers blossoming in the gutter, and have found, to our sorrow, that the most salutary education sometimes fails to eliminate an ancestral taint. And yet, the main fact is that a good environment will prevail over a bad heredity. As Bradford's well-weighed words probably express the truth: "Where there is no organic defect, as in insanity or idiocy, environment is the stronger force." The experience, he says, "of many organizations as the Children's Aid Society, which seeks to save children by placing them in new and better conditions, points to the same conclusion: it is all favorable to the theory that environment will modify heredity, and when given a fair chance has power to redeem it."

Here, then, is a force of which any victim of a bad heredity may avail himself; he may take himself out of vile associations; he may surround himself with influences that will stimulate and strengthen his better purposes, his nobler powers.

And this brings us to the one thing which he must not fail to do. He must recognize the fact that the greatest of all the forces that are working for his salvation is this very force of heredity. Heredity! We have been talking of it as a tremendous fact, and it is; we have been thinking of it, perhaps, as if it were a fact of significance purely malign, and it is not. There are two sides to heredity. The is the tendency to sin the only thing that we inherit? Not unless God is a fiend. No, no; goodness, purity, truth, honor, fidelity,—or the natural qualities from which these spring,—are also handed down from father to son; the pure stream of benign influence flows on from generation to generation; and while the evil tendency is apt to be noisiest and most obtrusive, the good is there, far more vital, far more persistent, than the evil. The worst man you know, in whose veins is flowing blood that a bad heredity and a bad environment have been unsuccessful to taint, has still in him many germs of good influence,—sentiments, impulses, wishes, that will spring to life if he will give them a chance to live. To discern these elements of good in his own nature, to rejoice in them, to believe that in them his real self is manifested, to cherish them as his dearest possessions—this is what every man must learn to do. These are the signs that God is working in him to will and to work of his good pleasure.

For what, after all, my brother, is the deepest fact about this heredity which has so sorely trou-

bled you? What is your parentage? Whose child are you? Is not God your Father? Are you not made in his image? Is it not his nature that you have inherited? And in spite of all that you have done, and of all that has been done by your progenitors to mar and defile the divinity within you, it is there still, the deepest, the most central fact, connected with your history. Doubt not that your life may have been as utterly as you will that glorious truth, even to hide it from your own eyes; but it is the truth nevertheless, and there is no other truth that means so much to you.

This, I say, is the fundamental truth about heredity. Instead of being a millstone about your neck it ought to be the anchor of your soul, sure and steadfast. No matter how low you may have fallen, no matter what the disabilities and evil tendencies of your life may be, God is your Father, his life is in you, his power is working to save you. Sin may abound in you, but unto you, yea in you, his grace, if you will only receive it, shall much more abound.

This is the gospel, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, the good news that Jesus came to bring. Let every struggling soul, weighed down by inherited tendencies to sin, crying, with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" lay hold on this hope set before him in the gospel.

Let us rise, for one moment, before we separate, to a point of view at which we can comprehend the

action of these forces which we are considering in the education of the race.

The central fact of heredity is God. No one can believe anything else who believes in God at all. It is a mighty power working out its designs. Evil as well as good is transmitted, because of the organic unity of humanity; because the generations must be sharers of one another's woes and weaknesses, if they are also to be sharers in one another's joys and triumphs. The discipline by which alone character is perfected must involve partnership in suffering as well as in blessedness. But God is this world, always making through these lines of inheritance. Can any sane man believe that he is on the side of evil tendency? No; the evil is at its very utmost temporary; it cancels itself; the good has in it the life of eternity. The old promise of the decalogue shows us a glimpse of the truth. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon their children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me, and showing mercy *unto thousands of generations* [this is the right translation] of them that love me and keep my commandments." The evil entail dies out after a few generations, the grace of God lives and grows for a thousand generations. And thus in this very law of heredity we find the power that is yet to redeem the race.

"But there is that other fact of environment," you are saying. Yes, thank God. For what, in

the largest sense, is the environment? It is God's universe; it is God. It is the world whose very foundations were laid in a grand redemptive purpose. It is the world whose elemental energies, in the morning of the creation, were baptized in the name of the Christ whose love, before all worlds, was the very heart of God. For he is "the first-born of all creation; for in him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth. . . . All things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." This is the environment of humanity upon the earth. This is the mighty, unfolding power which, with its slow and silent pressure, through the unhasting centuries, is working out the great designs of sovereign love.

Heredity and environment are the master words of our new science of life. I thank thee, evolutionist, for teaching me these words! For what is heredity? It is God, working in us. And what is environment? It is God, working round about us.

These are the larger truths which the unfolding thought of these latter days is bringing into clearer light. What a new gospel it is, and what a mighty hope it holds, for all who work for the triumph of truth and purity and peace upon the earth! How sure it makes us feel that

> "life shall on and upward go:
> The eternal step of progress beats
> To that great anthem, calm and slow,
> Which God repeats."

How evident it is that the dreaded evolution, which was to undermine our faith, has, in the words of Drummond, "ushered a new hope into the world." For just as soon as we are able to understand her voices we shall know that the supreme message of Science to this age is that all nature is on the side of the man who tries to rise. And all nature is but the revelation of God.

And this, O church of God, fumbling so long with your metaphysical refinements and your scholastic dogmas, is the real gospel of the Son of God, which, if you will only receive it, will give you strength to win the world. For the heavens above you, breaking forth into song, and the earth round about you, growing conscious of the presence of its Maker, are crying unto you, and saying, "Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!".

VII

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly taught in any single passage of Holy Scripture; it is inferred from these Scriptures rather than formulated by them. This is not, however, any conclusive disproof of the doctrine, for the doctrinal formularies of the Scriptures are few or none. Most theological propositions are gathered by induction from the biblical teachings. The last commission of the Master to his disciples is as strong an intimation of the truth which this doctrine involves as can be found in the New Testament. Disciples are to be baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." This implies a threefoldness in the divinity to whom this consecrating oath of baptism is spoken. The threefoldness is not defined; perhaps the abstinence from definition is here a mark of superhuman wisdom. But those who heard these words spoken, after the confession of their faith at the font or by the riverside, must have gained some notion of a certain threeness in the Being to whom they had confessed their allegiance. From these and many other words of Scripture the

thought of the church in the first three centuries very easily and naturally drew the theological statements of the doctrine of the Trinity.

In the form in which these statements have come down to us they are encumbered with insoluble difficulties. The doctrine of the Trinity, in the terms in which I was first taught to express it, is a barrier to reason and a stumbling-block to faith. It is only by shutting the eye of the understanding that one can accept it. The old statement was that there are three Persons in the Godhead, and the word Person was supposed to be the essential word; one must speak that word out clearly or one was a heretic. The emphasis put upon this word had the effect to make the threeness very distinct and the unity very indistinct. "I went one day," says one of the characters in a most helpful little book, "to our old minister, Dr. Sandy, who used to preach on it now and then. 'How,' said I, 'can three persons be one God?' He replied that the three are indeed persons, as distinct from each other as Peter, James, and John, but that they were, notwithstanding, one in the unity of a common divine nature, as Peter, James, and John are one in the unity of a common human nature." [1] This is the popular conception, and it is purely tritheistic. It is no slander to say that a great many Christians in America have believed in three gods. Thus Jonathan Edwards, in his famous "Observations upon the Trinity," con-

[1] *Gloria Patri*, by J. M. Whiton, p. 15.

stantly applies the pronouns of the third person plural to the persons of the Trinity; he speaks always of "them;" he tells with a great deal of minuteness what "they" have covenanted and agreed with one another that "they" will do in the work of redemption. There is a subordination among them, he says, which "must be conceived of as in some respect established by mutual free agreements wherein the Persons of the Trinity, of their own will, have as it were *formed themselves into a society* for carrying on the great design of glorifying the Deity and communicating his goodness." And again: "Nothing is more plain from Scripture than that the Father chooses the Person that shall be the Redeemer, and appoints him; and that the Son has his authority in this affair wholly from Him; which makes it evident that the economy by which the Father is Head of the Trinity is prior to the covenant of redemption. For He acts as such in the very making of that covenant, in choosing the Person of the Redeemer to be covenanted with about that work. The Father is the Head of the Trinity, and is invested with a right to act as such, before the Son is invested with the office of a mediator. Because the Father, in the exercise of his Headship, invests the Son with that office. By which it is evident, that that establishment by which the Father is invested with his character as the Head of the Trinity, precedes that which invests the Son with his character of mediator; and therefore precedes the

covenant of redemption; which is the establishment that invests the Son with that character. If the Son were invested with the office of a mediator by the same establishment and agreement of the Persons of the Trinity by which the Father is invested with power to act as Head of the Trinity, then the Father could not be said to elect and appoint the Son to his office of mediator, and invest Him with authority for it, any more than the Son elects and invests the Father with his character of Head of the Trinity; or any more than the Holy Ghost elects both the Son and the Father to their several economical offices; and the Son would receive his powers to be a mediator no more from the Father than from the Holy Ghost. Because in this scheme it is supposed that prior to the covenant of Redemption, all the Persons act as upon a level, and each Person, by one common agreement in that covenant of redemption, is invested with his proper office; the Father with that of Head, the Son with that of Mediator, the Spirit with that of common emissary and consummator of the designs of the other two."[1]

I have made a liberal extract, because it is well for us to get the full flavor of that old Trinitarianism which was nothing more or less than tritheism. The conception of the Trinity which Jonathan Edwards held, and which has been held by hundreds of thousands of devout men, is that of a

[1] *Observations concerning the Scripture Œconomy of the Trinity*, pp. 30-32.

trinitarian of independent deities who enter into covenants and contracts with one another, who establish among themselves an order of precedence, and parcel out the work of redemption according to an economy of their own with which this theologian appears to be strangely familiar. Of course the unity of the Godhead was always asserted by theologians of this class; they kept saying that there was but one God; but the unity was little more than a barren phrase, in their conception of it; the over-mastering and all inclusive idea was the threeness. So in all their doctrinal expositions, in their theories of the atonement, in their explanation of the mediatorial work of Christ, this tritheistic conception dominated everything. This was not true of the first three or four centuries; the Greek theologians who first wrought out this doctrine of the Trinity were great thinkers, and they carefully kept themselves out of those verbal snares; but it is true of the legal and mechanical theology which has prevailed in the Reformed churches for the last three centuries. It is not the doctrine of the great church creeds; neither the Apostles' Creed nor the Nicene Creed gives any footing to these tritheistic conceptions; they were developed in the attempts of the later Reformers to work out, under forensic analogies, a legal "plan of salvation."

This tritheism results, as I have said, from the emphasis placed on the word Person in the definition of Trinity. For although there have always

been various definitions by which the word was partially explained away, it has never been possible to vacate the word of its natural signification, and its implications have constantly vitiated not only the conceptions of the common people, but also the speculations of the theologians. For this word person cannot be used, in familiar speech, without conveying the two ideas of consciousness and will. You cannot think of a person without ascribing to him in your thought both self-consciousness and will. Now to say that there are in the Godhead three consciousnesses and three wills is to say that there are three gods. I hope that it is not heretical to deny that there are three gods — to insist, with old Israel, that the Lord our God is one Lord. Therefore the revolt of the older Unitarianism against a doctrine of the Trinity which practically denied the unity of God was justified; the protest was in the interest of sound thinking and sound morality. Let me give you authority on this subject which will hardly be questioned — the word of Mr. Joseph Cook.

"Have there not been teachers who have held that there are three wills in God? Yes. Have there not been in New England intelligent Christians who have worshiped three beings in their imagination, although in their thoughts they have asserted that God is one? I fear that there have been, and that there are yet. . . . Are we to regard these as well-educated Christians who in thoughts of God are constantly thinking of our Lord as if

he were at this hour in Gethsemane, or on the Mount of Olives, or walking on the shore of Galilee; and of the Father as among the constellations; and of the Spirit as shed down on us from the infinite spaces: three wills, three intellects, three sets of affections? You may regard such Christians tenderly; but for one, I regard them tenderly enough to wish that they might be both more biblical and more scientific." I had rallied my friends, go back to the Bosphorus, where I stood a few months ago, and worship with that emperor who hated his wife and went hence by suicide, than to be in name only an orthodox believer, or in theory to hold that there is but one God, but in imagination to worship three gods. . . . I affirm that I had rather go back to that shore of the azure water which connects the Black Sea with the Mediterranean, and omitting the leprosy of Mohammedanism, take for my religion pure Theism, than to hold that there are three gods with three wills, three sets of affections, three intellects, three consciences, and thus to deny the assurances of both scriptural and scientific truth, and make of myself the beginning of a polytheist, though calling myself orthodox.[1]

I think that Mr. Cook bears needlessly hard on Jonathan Edwards and all the rest of the good people who have been entangled in these trinitarian mazes; their hearts were right though their heads were puzzled, and I, for my part, would take

[1] *Transcendentalism*, chap. xi.

my chances with them a great deal sooner than with the worshipers on the banks of the Bosphorus. Nevertheless, Mr. Cook is quite right in contending that any doctrine which loosens the hold of men on the great central truth of the divine unity is misleading and dangerous. I am sure that the reverence which is due to God has been weakened, sadly weakened, by these fruitless confusions.

Still, here are the words, the great commission of our Lord and Master: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of *the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" Are these words meaningless? I believe that they are full of divine significance. I believe that they convey to us a truth which no man can afford to neglect, a truth which lies at the basis of all sound thinking in philosophy and religion. It seems to me incredible that a belief which has been held by the vast majority of Christians for eighteen centuries should not rest on a solid substratum of truth. The forms in which this truth has found expression may have been grotesque and inadequate, but the truth itself may have been feeling after it, though they could not find words to define it. We shall not be able to define it. Those themes that touch the infinite do not lend themselves to the phrases of our formal logic. Far less is said than is left unsaid when our weightiest word has been spoken; but if we look steadfastly away for a little while toward the depths of infinite Being, it may be possible to find

a point or two of light. Of course I am not speaking at this time to those who have no faith, but to those who believe in God, and who seek to know and obey Him.

To all those who believe in God and worship Him, the primary truth about Him is that his name is Love. That his crowning attribute is goodness, not power, is the foundation of faith. Science we know, and law we know; but the deepest thing in the universe is love. Of all forms of Christian Faith this is the postulate. That God is one He has been from all eternity. From everlasting to everlasting, his essential nature is the same. If love is the central element in his being to-day, it must always have been so. But there must have been a time when the created universe was not. In that dateless eternity God was love. But whom was there to love? Was it self-love that consumed his infinite energies? The thought is horrible, almost blasphemous. No; if from the beginning God was love, from the beginning there must have been in his very nature some kind of manifoldness or otherness, which could give scope to his affections. This gives us no hint of threeness in the divine nature; it only shows us that we must make room in our conceptions for something other than a solitary inhabitant of eternity.

To all Christian worshipers God is the "Father in heaven." Nor can we imagine that this name expresses any recent addition to his attributes. Fatherhood belongs to the essence of his being.

It is not a function that He has taken on for temporary purposes. Not only is He the Eternal Ruler, He is also the Eternal Father. But as there can be no son without a father, so there can be no father without a son. The Eternal Father implies the Eternal Son.] What all this signifies, I do not try to tell; I shall not imitate Jonathan Edwards in his dissertation upon the "Œconomy of the Trinity," but it is certain that the word sonship sums up all our highest thoughts of God implies the distinction which underlies the doctrine of the Trinity. Of course these words are used symbolically; but what if that they "symbolize"? Analogies made in the image of God there must be something in the nature of God to which these terms correspond. The terms "Fatherhood" and "Sonship," says Dr. Fairbairn, "represent love as it were to God and as eternal as God. For Him it never began to be, for this is the meaning of the Eternal Sonship. The love of man has a potential before it has an actual being . . . but the love of God had always an actual, never a potential being, for only so could it be perfect love. . . . Man can never know a father's affection unless he be a father, or woman a mother's love unless she be a mother. The capacity may be there, but only the capacity, the aptitude to be, not the actual being. But the Godhead means that as Fatherhood and Sonship have been eternal, so also has the love. . . . Hence creation did not mean for God the beginning of love, or even any exercise of it."[1]

[1] *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 410.

We are beginning, in these days, to understand that no man can be a man alone. It is only in the right relations with others that he realizes himself. And if man is made in the image of God, there must be some such ethical relation as this in God himself, if He cannot be a solitary monad, an infinite Ego, sitting apart and speechless through all eternity. § "The Creator," says Fairbairn, "is the archetype even more than the architect of the creation; the Godhead is, as it were, the idea and model after which it is built. He who is according to his essence a society makes a social universe."

Going a little deeper than this into the principles of being, we find a foundation in necessary thought for that threefoldness which is involved in the doctrine of the Trinity.

What are the elements of Knowledge? How much do I surely know? In the first place I know myself. I know the operations of my own mind, the facts of self-consciousness. I know that I am I, that I have certain thoughts, certain feelings, certain purposes; that certain pleasures and pains are part of my experience; that these successions of thought and feeling and will are bound together in the unity of a conscious personality.

In the second place I know that there is a world outside of myself. Forms and colors and sounds and pressures and flavors of all kinds report themselves in my experience, and signify to me the presence of existences all about me with which I am strangely related. The business of life is learning

to distinguish and classify and reason about these experiences, and to comprehend the objects and the forces which they bring before my thought. Between myself and the world outside of myself the distinction is clear and sharp; the "me" and the "not me" are the opposite poles of thought. But the more I know about this world outside of myself, the clearer it becomes that it is one world, that a principle of unity binds all its phenomena together, that all these marvelous varieties of being "are but parts of one stupendous whole." One law of gravitation controls every particle of matter in all these worlds; one law of the conservation of energy explains all these permutations and transformations of force. It is a Universe — that is the fundamental fact.

And now, when I begin to study a little more carefully the relations between the "me" and the "not me," — between myself and the universe outside of myself, — some very curious facts at once come to light. The sharp distinction, the contrariety, between the world of thought within and the world of being without is all the while asserting itself; but, on the other hand, the harmony between the thinking mind and the objects of thought is marvelous. For the awakening of the powers of the mind itself is due, no doubt, to the action of stimuli from the outside world upon those powers. We come to ourselves, to the knowledge of our own powers, only through the mediumship of things outside of ourselves. The light which the baby

sees, the surfaces which he touches, the flavors which he tastes arouse his perceptive faculties, and set his mind at work. From the child's first conscious moment, the things that are round about him constantly appeal to him through every avenue of sense; all manner of sights and sounds and odors are striking upon his senses and stirring up his intellect. This is by no means saying that all knowledge comes through the senses; it is only saying that through the senses come the stimuli by which the mind is awakened.

> "The baby, new to earth and sky
> What time his tender palm is pressed
> Against the archeus of the breast
> Has never thought that 'this is I;'
>
> "But as he grows he gathers much,
> And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'
> And finds 'I am not what I see
> And other than the things I touch;'
>
> "So sounds he to a separate mind
> From whence clear memory may begin,
> As through the frame that binds him in
> His isolation grows distinct."

But not only do we find ourselves through our contact with the world outside of ourselves, it is also true that we find in ourselves the interpretation of that outside world. The laws of space and time, of cause and effect, of identity and resemblance, of number and quantity, are purely ideal; they belong to the furniture of our own minds; and yet that world outside of us is utterly meaningless

and unintelligible until we have brought it under the light of these ideas. We talk about the laws of nature, but these laws only express the correspondence of the facts of nature to the regulative ideas of our own reason. It is this correspondence which is the marvelous fact. The categories of reason supply the principles by which all this outside world can be perfectly explained. We take this lamp of reason and walk with it firmly and fearlessly through every part of the universe: the world within is a perfect mirror of the world without.[1]

"All our life, then," says Dr. Edward Caird, "moves between these two terms which are essentially distinct from and even opposed to each other. Yet, though thus set in an antagonism which can never cease, because with its ceasing the whole nature of both would be subverted, they are also essentially related, nor could either of them be conceived to exist without the other; the consciousness of the one, we might even say, is inseparably the consciousness of its relation to the other. We know the *object* only as we bring it back to the unity of the self; we know the *subject* only as we realize it in the object."

And now comes an inference of mighty significance, which I shall let Dr. Caird draw for you at length because no words of my own could express it so clearly: "These two ideas, between which our whole life of thought and action is contained,

[1] *The Evolution of Religion*, p. 65.

and from one to the other of which it is continually moving, point back to a third idea which embraces them both, and which in turn constitutes their limit and ultimate condition. For when we have two terms, which are thus essentially distinguished and essentially related, which we are obliged to *contrast and oppose* to each other, seeing that they have neither of them any meaning except as opposite counterparts of each other, and which we are equally obliged to *unite*, seeing that the whole content of each is just its movement toward the other, we are necessarily driven to think of these two terms as the manifestation or realization of a third term, which is higher than either. . . . Each of them presupposes the other, and therefore neither of them can be regarded as producing the other. Hence, we are compelled to think of them both as rooted in a still higher principle, which is to be the source of their relatively independent existence and the all-embracing unity that limits their independence. This principle, therefore, may be unequal as a crystal analogy that holds them together, and which, through its very transparency, is apt to escape our notice, yet which must always be there as the condition and limit of their operation. To put it more directly, the idea of an absolute unity — which transcends all the oppositions of finitude, and especially the last opposition which includes all others, the opposition of subject and object — *is the ultimate presupposition of our consciousness.* . . . The idea of God, therefore, — meaning by

that, in the first instance, only the idea of an absolute principle of unity which binds in one 'all thinkings things, all objects of all thought,' which is at once the source of being to all things that are, and of knowing to all beings that know,—is an essential principle, or rather the ultimate essential principle of our intelligence,—a principle which must manifest itself in the life of every rational creature. 'Every creature who is capable of the consciousness of an objective world and of the consciousness of a self is capable also of the consciousness of God; or, to sum up Dr. Martineau in one word, every rational being as such is a religious being.'[1]

Here is a truth from which you can no more escape than you can escape from your shadow. By this I do not mean that all human beings have come to a realization of this truth; there are some human beings who cannot count twenty; multitudes to whom the simplest of mathematical laws are utterly unknown; but if you should take these people from the wilds of Patagonia, and put them into a primary school, and explain to them the words in which those laws are conveyed, and show them these relations of numbers and quantity, they could no more deny or doubt them than they could deny or doubt their own existence. A man can escape from his shadow by going into the dark; if he comes under the light of the sun his shadow is there. A man may be so mentally undisciplined that he does not recognize the ideas of which

[1] *The Evolution of Religion*, pp. 66-68.

we have been speaking, but let him learn the use of his reason, let him reflect upon his own mental processes, and he will know that they are necessary ideas. When he knows himself, when he knows the world of phenomena outside of himself, when he becomes conscious of the fact that the world within and the world without are set over against each other in the sharpest discrimination, and yet that they are so essentially related to each other that neither has any life or order or significance without the other, then he must, if he is a rational being, be forced to the conclusion that these three correlated existences there must be a Power by whom their correlation is ordained, a Being from whom they both proceed, a Unity in which they cohere. There is nothing in mathematics more certain than this.

Have we not here, in these fundamental laws of the mind itself, a suggestion of that threefoldness which men are trying to comprehend when they attempt to state the doctrine of the Trinity?

There is a Spirit that witnesseth to our spirits that we are the children of God.

There is a Universe without, a marvelous Creation, from which the everlasting power and divinity shine forth. Of this Creation, man, who is made in the image of God, is the crown; of this humanity, Jesus, the Christ of Nazareth, is the consummation, the completion, — Son of man and Son of God. In him, Paul says, all things come to a Head; he

is the explanation of the Creation; in him all things consist.

There is a Living God, above all this Universe, the Infinite and Eternal Power, from whom all things proceed; whose thought gives it unity, whose love is the soul of its order and the spring of its beneficence; a Being whom no man hath seen nor can see, but whose existence is the presupposition of all coherent thought.

The Absolute and Eternal God, Source of all being, dwelling in light unapproachable;

The Manifested God, revealed to us in Nature and in History — especially and most perfectly in the Incarnation, which is the consummation of Nature and the goal of History;

The Indwelling God, who reveals himself in our thought, who speaks in our consciences, whose inspiration is the motive power of all our best endeavors.

Are not these three ideas necessarily implied in all our thought upon these highest themes?

"The Trinity of the Living God," says Dr. Whiton, "must be a Trinity in His life. And this, according to the scriptural idea of God . . . must include these three terms: the Transcendent Divine Life that is above the world, the Immanent Divine Life that is universal through the world and perfected in the Christ, and the Individualized Divine Life that is begotten in each separate consciousness and conscience."[1]

[1] *Gloria Patri*, p. 103.

"There is one God and Father of all," says Paul the Apostle, "who is over all, and through all, and in all."

So far as this, it seems to me, we can go upon very firm ground. So much as this is contained in the necessary implications of coherent thought. We know all this, not by anybody's testimony, but by observing the operations of our own minds. And we have here the essential truth upon which the doctrine of the Trinity is based. We have paused, we shall always do well to pause, at a long distance from that scholastic doctrine which describes and defines three separate personalities co-operating in the work of redemption; those venturesome philosophizings lead to very dangerous errors. But there is an essential threefoldness in the revelation to us of the divine Being; and we must hold firmly to all these three terms if we wish to think sanely about God. He who believes only in an Absolute and Eternal Being, back of all phenomena, becomes an Agnostic Deist, with a faith as pale and cold as moonlight; there is no vital warmth for the soul in such a theory. He who believes only in the God manifested in Nature and History becomes a Pantheist; with him moral distinctions are confounded, and the personality of man as well as the personality of God are hopelessly obscured. He who believes only in the God who is revealed to him in his own consciousness is liable to drift into a barren rationalism or a blind fanaticism. The solar light is the blending of

three primary rays; in the white light of noon we may not be conscious of the red, the green, or the violet, but they are all there: if either were wanting we could not see the world as it is: those who look through red or green or violet glasses do not see true. So though we may not think of the threenss when we think of God, those distinctions lie there, implicit in our thought, and clear and steady reflection will bring them all to light.

Those studies may make it appear that this doctrine of the Trinity is not, after all, to be dismissed as a mere relic of superstition. The old scholastic refinements concerning it are grotesque enough, no doubt, but there is a mighty truth underlying it. That there are depths here which the plummet of our reason fails to sound is evident enough; who by searching can find out God?

> "Holy and infinite! viewless! eternal!
> Veiled in the glory that none can sustain,
> None comprehendeth thy being supernal
> Nor can the heaven of heavens contain.
>
> "Holy and infinite! limitless, boundless,
> All thy perfections and powers and praises!
> Ocean of mystery! awful and soundless
> All thine unsearchable judgments and ways!"

Verily we ought to walk reverently and with veiled faces in the presence of these mysteries of being. But I trust that we can see that when the glorious company of the apostles and the noble army of martyrs and the holy church throughout the world lift their united voice worshipping Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost, it is not wholly an incoherent cry, but may be, in the minds of those who have thought most deeply, the utterance of a profoundly rational faith.

I have not yet mentioned my own deepest reason for believing this doctrine. That is the testimony of experience. I have found that I need to know God under all these characters, — that each of these forms of revelation meets a special want of my mind and heart. For the satisfaction of my reason, for the confirmation of my faith, I need to know him as the Eternal Father and Creator, the Power behind all phenomena, the great First Cause from whom the universe proceeds.

For the satisfaction of my heart's deepest cravings, I must also know him as Immanuel, God with us, the divinity revealed in the terms of humanity, the Elder Brother whose sympathy with me is perfect, who stands by my side, my companion, my fellow, the sharer of my griefs and my pain. A God who could not thus be manifested to me in the essential elements of humanity I could never love nor trust.

I need, also, to believe in a God who is able to hold fellowship and communion with me in my thoughts and hopes and wishes; one who can communicate his truth and his love and his strength and his calmness to me in the very centres of my spiritual being; with whom I can talk when my eyes are shut and my lips are closed, — who can inspire me to think clearly, to walk loftily, to strive

nobly; who can be with me always, in an instant, when my heart cries out for Him, to strengthen me for the conflict or the suffering of the hour.

In all these ways I need to know Him who is my unseen and almighty Friend; I do not know how the deepest needs of my soul could be satisfied if I were deprived of either of these revelations of God. And while I am far from wishing to set up any dogmatic formula of the contents of the divine nature to which other men's thoughts must conform, I am glad that this threefold revelation of God is here in the Bible. I believe that all men who live any genuine religious life — all men of faith and prayer — really find God in all these ways that I have mentioned. Their logic may discard the doctrine of the Trinity, but in their life they lay hold of the vital truth which underlies that doctrine. As proof of this let me quote from the "Harvard University Hymn Book" three hymns by eminent Unitarians, in which these three aspects of Christian experience are beautifully set forth:—

The first is by the Rev. Samuel Longfellow, brother of the more famous poet:—

> "God of the earth, the sky, the sea,
> Maker of all above, below,
> Creation lives and moves in thee,
> Thy present life through all doth flow.
>
> "Thy love is in the sunshine's glow,
> Thy life is in the quickening air;
> When lightnings flash and storm-winds blow,
> There in thy power, thy law is there.

"We feel thy calm at evening's hour.
Thy grandeur in the march of night,
And when the morning breaks in power,
We hear thy word, 'Let there be light.'"

The second is by Theodore Parker:—

"O Thou great Friend to all the sons of men,
Who once appeared in humblest guise below,
Supreme to whole, to break the captive's chain,
To call thy brethren forth from want and woe, —

"Thou would I sing: thy truth is still the light
Which guides the nations, groping on their way;
Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
Yet hoping ever for the perfect day.

"Thou: thou art still the life: thou art the way
The holiest know, — light, life, and way of heaven;
And they who dearest hope and deepest pray,
Tell by the light, life, way that thou hast given."

The last is by Nathaniel L. Frothingham, once professor in Harvard University and long minister of the First Church in Boston:—

"O God, whose presence glows in all
Within, around us, and above,
Thy word we bless, thy name we call,
Whose word is truth, whose name is love.

"That truth be with the heart believed
Of all who seek this sacred place,
With power proclaimed, in peace received,
Our spirit's light, thy Spirit's grace.

"That love its holy influence pour
To keep us meek and make us free,
And cheer its blessing influence more
Round each with all and all with thee.

"Send down its angel to our side,
Send in its calm upon the breast;
For we would know no other guide,
And we can need no other rest."

There is no orthodox Christian who cannot pour out his whole heart in these Unitarian praises of Father, Son, and Spirit. And no Unitarian who sings these hymns should be too swift to deny that a great truth underlies the doctrine of the Trinity. When we philosophize and argue we often fall apart, but when we sing and pray we come together. Logic divides us, but love unites us. Let us argue less and worship more; so shall we come, in the unity of the spirit, into the bonds of peace.

VIII

THE WORD MADE FLESH

The subjects which we have studied together are not easy subjects to understand; every one of them brings before us some of the deep mysteries of existence. But they are questions which no thoughtful man can help asking, questions to which, if we would have rest for our minds, we must be able to give some sort of intelligent answer. It is not well for us to be dogmatic and intolerant of opinions which do not accord with our own; but the effort to form some reasonable theory of our relation to that world of reality which lies back of all sensible phenomena is one that no right-minded man can be excused from making. We know — in our best moments we are deeply conscious — that we are not the creatures of a day; that our natures have their roots in realities which lie beneath the surface of things; that our lives are fed by fountains beyond the reach of our senses. And we are not less sure that motives which spring from a world unseen and eternal give to human character its deepest significance. Not to be profoundly interested in these questions is to renounce our birthright as men, and to descend to the level of the foxes and the swine.

We are now to study a Character who claimed to have exceptional knowledge of that unseen world. Whether this claim is established I will not now stop to inquire. But no one can dispute the rank of Jesus of Nazareth as a character in history. That a name has been given him above every name is not a question for discussion. Over the nations which have been making history during the past fifteen centuries he has held an unquestioned supremacy. His followers now far outnumber in the world's population the adherents of any other form of faith, and the place which they occupy in the life of the world, in the annals of civilisation, is the foremost place. The problem which this Jesus presents to human thought is the most profound, the most interesting, that human thought has ever entertained. About him and his gospel and his kingdom more books have been written than about any other subject that has engaged the minds of men. Nor is there, even in this scientific age, any abatement of this interest: the production of literature bearing upon his life and teachings was never greater than at this moment. Let me read to you at length, from the pen of Dr. Fairbairn, a well-weighed estimate of the place which he occupies in human history: —

"He has left the mark of his hand on every generation of civilised men that has lived since he lived, and it would not be science to find him everywhere and never to ask what he was and what he did. Persons are the most potent factors of pro-

gress and change in history : and the greatest Person known to it is the one who has been the most powerful factor of ordered progress. Who this is does not lie open to dispute. Jesus Christ is a name that represents the most wonderful story and the profoundest problem on the field of history,—the one because the other. There is no romance so marvelous as the most prosaic version of his history. The Son of a despised and hated people, meanly born, humbly bred, without letters, without opportunity, unbefriended, never, save for one brief and fatal moment, the idol of the crowd, opposed by the rich, resisted by the religious and the learned, persecuted unto death by the priests, destined to a life as short as it was obscure, issuing from his obscurity only to meet a death of unpitied infamy, he yet, by means of his very sufferings and his scorns, rests upon a throne such as no monarch ever filled, and a dominion such as no Cæsar ever exercised. He lends captive the civilized peoples ; they accept his words as law, though they confess it a law higher than human statutes likes to obey ; they build him churches, they worship him, they praise him in songs, interpret him in philosophies and theologies ; they deeply love, they madly hate, for his sake. It was a new thing in the history of the world ; for though this humble life was written and stood vivid before the eye and imagination of men, nay, because it vividly did so stand, they honored, loved, served him as no ancient deity had been honored, loved, or served.

We may say, indeed, he was the first being who had realized for man the idea of the divine; he proved his Godhead by making God become a credible, conceived, real Being to man. And all this was due to no temporary passion, to no transient madness, such as now and then overtakes peoples as well as persons. It has been the most permanent thing in the history of mind; no other belief has had so continuous and invariable a history. . . . Out of the story, when viewed in relation to the course of human development, rises for philosophy the problem, Can he, so mean in life, so unlikely in history, stand where he does by chance? Can he, who of all persons is the most necessary to the orderly and progressive course of history, be but the fortuitous result of a chapter of accidents?"[1]

When the question is put in this way I am sure that we shall all admit that it is entitled to respectful consideration. Such a phenomenon as is presented by the life and influence of Jesus Christ requires explanation. I do not know that we shall be able to explain it, but I am sure that we shall not be willing to assign to it a trivial or inadequate cause.

The question which at once confronts us when we begin to speak of Jesus Christ is the question, Was he human or divine? The question generally assumes that an antithesis is presented: that if he was human he was not divine, and that if he was

[1] *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 6–8.

divine he was not human.' The irresistible propensity of the semi-educated mind to put all truth of life and being into two sharply discriminated categories, and to affirm one of these and deny the other, comes out again in the treatment of this question. With many people everything is either up or down, either right or left, either long or short, either black or white, either sweet or sour; between these opposite poles of thought their minds find no resting-place, and the thought of a higher unity in which contrasted truths are reconciled has never dawned upon them. Such minds think that when Jesus Christ is spoken of one must be able to affirm instantly that he is either human or divine. It is true that the orthodox church dogma affirms that in him two natures are combined in one person, that he is both God and man; but this conception is feebly held by the great majority; those who have believed him to be divine have considered his humanity to be rather a semblance than a reality; and those who have held him to be human have regarded his divinity as figurative rather than literal.

I must confess that the theological formula of two natures in one person conveys to my mind no clear meaning. And I greatly doubt whether there are two kinds of natures in the spiritual world, — a divine nature and a human nature. When the Master says that "the more abiding spiritual element, which is the essential core of humanity, must be identical in nature with the moral and

spiritual essence of Deity, else we could have no certainty that righteousness in man is the same kind of thing that it is in God.* I am quite unable to find any flaw in the statement; it seems to me indubitable. That man is another kind of a being from God — a being with a different and contradicted nature — is not, I hope, the truth. I have always supposed that the statement that we are the children of God, that we are made in his image, was to be accepted as substantial verity. If so, there is no need of mechanically uniting together two natures in the person of Christ. He had his own nature; and though he took on him the outward form and fashion of a man, there was no need of any assumption of a nature foreign to himself. If he possessed the divine nature he possessed the human nature, for the two are essentially one. Are we more divine than you and I? Yes; because he was far more broadly and grandly human than we are, because humanity in him was lifted up and glorified.

I trust that our study of the supernatural may have helped us a little in getting hold of this truth. In that discussion we saw that the natural and the supernatural are only different sides of the same thing; that God resides in and manifests himself through every existence and every force of nature: that nature itself, in the depths of its being, is all supernatural. "Whatever strides science may make in time to come," says Mr. Illingworth, "to-

* *Gloria Patri*, p. 56.

wards decomposing atoms and forces into simpler and yet simpler elements, those elements will still have issued from a secret laboratory into which science cannot enter; and the human mind will be as far as ever from knowing what they really are. . . . Science may resolve the complicated life of the material universe into a few elementary forces, light, heat, and electricity, and these, perhaps, into modifications of some simpler energy, but *of the origin of energy* it knows no more than did the Greeks of old.[1] Theology asserts that in the beginning was the Word, and in Him was life, the life of all things created; in other words, that He is the source of all that energy whose persistent, irresistible versatility of action is forever at work moulding and clothing and peopling worlds."

Against this fundamental statement of theology, science has not one single word to say: the conception gives unity and coherency to all her researchings: and every one of her discoveries makes the central truth of theology more sublimely probable. The whole result of science, as the writer whom I was just quoting goes on to say, is in perfect harmony with our Christian creed, that all things were made by the Eternal Reason; but, more than this, it illustrates and is illustrated by the further doctrine of his indwelling presence in the things of his creation, rendering each of them at once a revelation and a prophecy, a thing of beauty and finished workmanship, worthy to exist for its own sake, and

[1] *Last Month*, pp. 196, 197.

yet a step to higher purposes, an instrument for grander work.

> "'God tastes an infinite joy,
> In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss.
> From whom all being emanates, all power
> Proceeds; in whom is life for evermore,
> Yet whom existence in its lowest form
> Includes; where dwells enjoyment, there is He;
> With still a living point of bliss remote,
> A happiness in store after a sphere
> Of distant glory in full view.'"[1]

If, now, we are able to grasp the fact that Nature herself is in all her degrees, in all her central forces, supernatural, we shall not find it difficult to understand that humanity, in its essential nature, is *divine*; that he who is perfect man is, by that fact, the perfect revelation of God to man. That Jesus Christ was the perfect Man, the ideal Man, is scarcely disputed by candid and reverent students of history. As such, he must be the manifestation of God. Does not this philosophy offer some adequate account of the rank that he has taken among men, and the dominion which he has exercised over them?

The one thing we need to do is to rid ourselves of the disjunctive notion of the semi-educated mind, that the natural and the supernatural, earth and heaven, man and God, are antithetical terms; that the one term of each of these couplets represents nothing that the other is and all that the other is not. When you ask me whether Christ was divine

[1] *Last Month*, p. 159.

or human it is a little like asking me whether the capacity of a room is due to its length or its width. No matter how long it may be, if it has not some width it will have no capacity; and no matter how wide it may be, if it has not some length it will have no capacity. Both dimensions must be represented in any conceivable area. And the element which we call human, as well as the element which we call divine, must be represented in any spiritual being with whom it is possible for us to hold communion. They are different phases of the same sublime fact.

The incarnation of the Son of God is not, then, and cannot be any unnatural event, any interruption or dislocation of the natural order. When Christ said, I came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law, his words had a deeper meaning than any of his disciples were able to comprehend. He is the fulfillment and completion of nature, and human nature, not less than of the Jewish ritual. He brings to perfect expression the Word which was in the beginning, and to which nature has given, in the increasing purpose of the ages, an inarticulate voice.

God has been abiding in the world and manifesting himself through the world ever since the morning of the creation. The universe is, in the deepest sense, the Word of God, the revelation of his being. The heavens declare his glory. Day unto day uttereth speech concerning Him, and night unto night showeth knowledge. "The invisible

things of God," says Paul, "since the creation are perceived through the things that are made." All the order of the kingdoms, the order revealed in the sublime harmonies of the solar system, and in the arrangement of leaves on the branches and of atoms in the molecules, is the expression of mind. We know this, because it is all severely and precisely mathematical; and what can mathematics be, if it is not the revelation of mind? It is in the kingdoms of life, however, that the presence of God is most clearly manifest; for here is a subtle force which defies all the analytic skill of the physicists. And at the summit of the kingdoms of life stands man. Evolution shows us the process by which the Humanoid God, working unwearedly in nature, has brought forth this heir of the ages, and has prepared him by a marvelous discipline to receive the highest truth, and to share in the glory of the Father.*

* "For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor,
Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands,
Thou hast put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."

With the appearance of man we see the work of creation approaching its goal. The organism, through long stages of growth and improvement, is at last fitted for the unfolding of self-conscious life, and the life is there ready to be imparted.

Every stage of this development has witnessed the communication of some higher revelation of God: still at length the spirit, made in the image of himself, is tabernacled in the flesh. Man is no more a creature, nor a servant, but a son. He is made in the image of the Father; he is intelligent, conscious, free; God has endowed him with his own spiritual attributes; he is fitted for communion and fellowship with God.

If, now, God is immanent in the creation, it is evident that the signs of his presence must be most clear in humanity, which is the crown of the creation. In humanity God must be most distinctly manifested. And this is, beyond all question, the scriptural idea, and the idea which has always guided the instinct of the Christian church.

But the question arises, How much of God is thus revealed in nature and in humanity? His power, his wisdom, his patience, his beauty, in some sense also his holiness, have been found in nature by devout students; but it has often been supposed that his mercy and forgiveness are not there revealed; that for the knowledge of these we must go to the Bible. But the Bible itself is our warrant for denying this doctrine. The mercy that endureth forever must have been known before men learned to write. And Paul tells us that not only God, but *the Christ of God is immanent in the creation*; that those divine attributes of pity and clemency and mercy which Jesus reveals in his life and death are part of the groundwork of

nature, the very roots out of which the whole life of the world has grown; so that the Word, which Christ himself was, was indeed in the beginning with God, and all things were made through him — came into being, as it were, through the channels of Christliness.[1] Thus the ageless process of evolution has been steadily developing in the creation the Christly elements, — the elements of love and self-sacrifice; and men in all lands have seen the Christ in nature and in human nature, and have known that God was bountiful and gracious, and have trusted in Him and found peace and salvation.

The advent of the Son of man is then no sudden break in the order of nature, but the culmination and completion of the revelation of God. As Dr. Dale, the great English Congregational theologian has written, "Christ's incarnation is not "an isolated and abnormal wonder. It was God's revelation to the true and ideal relation of all men to God." Or as another says, "The historic hour when the Word became flesh, we call by preeminence the Incarnation, since in Christ the Divine Word finds fullest utterance. But it is no detached event; it is the issue of an eternal process of utterance, the Word "whose goings forth," as Micah said, "have been from everlasting." Still it is true that to Christ *supremely* belongs the name of Son which includes all the life that is begotten of God. He is the beloved and unique representative of this

[1] Col. i. 15-17.

universal sonship; '*the firstborn*,' as Paul said, '*of all creation*.' Worthiest to bear the name of *the* Son of God in a preeminent but not exclusive right is he. Not only has he revealed to orphaned men their partnership with him in the life and love of the All Father. His peerless distinction as the Son is that in him shine at their brightest those moral glories which belong to the very crown of deity.[1]

What need was there of this fuller manifestation?

What need was there that the century plant, long years growing, long years maturing, holding all the while the secret of its life in its heart, should come at length to perfect flower? The life of the plant in bloom is the same life that was in the plant during the slow years of its growth, but who would have known its real nature if it had not, in the fullness of time, lifted up to the light that erect and towering scape, and flung to the breeze its mighty profusion of bloom?

What need was there in the long summer twilight that the sun should rise? The light that first touched with ivory fingers the eastern horizon, before the birds awoke, — the light that slowly grew, from the faintest dawn, until shapes and colors slowly disclosed themselves, and the dripping leaves and the frosty bathed flowers stood waiting for the glory to be revealed, — was the light of the sun, none other; why, if we have some glimmer of

[1] *Gloria Patri*, p. 92.

that light, by which in the gloaming we may grope along our path, should there be any need on earth of the sun's reigning ray?

I think that my questions answer themselves. There is always need that life shall complete itself. It is the one supremely needful thing. The moral imperative springs directly out of that need. As one has said, "The evident end of any being is to be, according to the nature given to him. If the rose does not blossom, if the bee does not fly and gather honey, we say they have not fulfilled their destinies." That need is a part of the very system of things. Humanity, as truly as the century plant, needs to come to perfect flower. Such a need is inherent in itself, as the highest type of being in the creation.

But there is a deeper need here, to the understanding of which we do not attain by studying the life of the plant. The century plant has in itself its own impulse to complete its life; but its progress toward perfection may be greatly assisted. If the gardener knows the nature of this plant, knows what it is in its perfection, he knows how to work and how to wait for that perfection. Unless he does know this, his labor of cultivation may be misdirected, may be abandoned before the plant has come to flower. The ideal of the plant must be before his mind in order that his treatment of it may be intelligent.

Now every man has in himself this double life. He is both plant and gardener. He has a nature

to be developed and perfected; he has an intelligence and a will by which this perfection is to be secured. Therefore he must know what human perfection is, in order that his work to secure it may be wisely directed. He must see humanity in perfect flower, in order that he may comprehend his own humanity in its completeness. If the evident "end of any being is to be," how evident is the necessity that any being to whom, in some large measure, its own destiny is committed, should be able to conjugate, in all its moods and tenses, that great verb *to be*, how evident the necessity that every man should somehow have before him, for his guidance, the figure of the perfect man!

Man is always an idealist. He is not merely impelled, as the plant is, by forces which he cannot resist, he is led and allured by visions that go before him and that beckon him on. All his real gains are made by his voluntary pursuit of the ideals thus presented to his choice. It is not by what he is driven to do that he wins perfection, but by what he aims to do, and strives to do. Herein resides the very secret of his manhood. And hence arises the need that there should be clearly revealed and manifested to him the end at which he ought to aim, the perfection for which he is bound to strive.

It was needful, therefore, that the life should be manifested; that the Word should become flesh and dwell among us, that we might behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the

Father, full of grace and truth. The advent of the Son of man had relations to the world's sin and the world's need of which we shall treat in another chapter. His work in the world was conditioned by the world's suffering and woe. But if the shadow of sin had never fallen upon this planet, that perfect manifestation of the divine humanity which he was would surely have been made to men. The Word which was spoken in the beginning, and which, under its threefold significance of Law and Life and Love, had been finding faint and incoherent utterance through the ages, must at length have come to such clear articulation as it found in the life of Him who was, in a measure that no other of mortals could claim to be, both Son of man and Son of God.

Let us gather up the strands of this discussion:

1. God is in his world, and has been since the morning of the Creation. Visible there to the eye in heart. The immanent God is the Life of all life.

2. Christ is in his world, and has been since the morning of the Creation. The Word was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; all things that live have in themselves the elements of Christliness. Love and self-sacrifice are at the very heart of nature.

3. This Word of God, the Word of sympathy, of mercy, of forgiveness, has been struggling into speech from the beginning; many have dimly understood it, and found salvation by trusting in it.

4. In the fullness of time, in Jesus of Nazareth the Word was made flesh. In him, for the first and only time in history, the Word of God found clear and perfect articulate expression. He was the ideal man, the consummation and the crown of humanity, and therefore he was the manifestation of God.

> "Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
> Within our earthly sod.
> Most human, and yet most divine,
> The flower of man and God."

IX

HOW CHRIST SAVES MEN

THE doctrine of the Atonement is generally regarded as the central doctrine of the evangelical system, and a brief sketch of the history of this doctrine would be instructive to those who imagine that orthodoxy, in the words of Vincent of Lerins, is that which has been believed "always, everywhere, and by all." This idea of the immutability of Christian doctrine will scarcely survive even a cursory reading of any history of dogma. The forms through which belief has passed are many and various. Evolution may lack credentials in the kingdoms of physical life, but here in theology its reign is undisputed. All the great facts with which the Darwinian theory makes us familiar — variation, hereditary transmission, natural (in this case spiritual) selection, and the survival of the fittest — stand out in the clearest light on this field of dogmatics.

The tendency to produce multitudinous varieties of belief on all these subjects is always present; these beliefs at once come into conflict and there is a struggle for life among them: those survive which are most in harmony with their environ-

ment. The great fact is, moreover, that the environment is the Christian consciousness of the church, which is more and more pervaded by the spirit of Christ. The spiritual progress of the kingdom of God is carried forward in the realm of the affections: the gentleness and patience and purity of Christ are communicated from life to life; the parable of the leaven is in constant course of verification. It is thus that the world grows better, and the theories of the thinkers, subjected to the acceptance of this purified Christian consciousness, are constantly modified for the better; their crudities and unsoundnesses are gradually removed away; loftier conceptions, worthier ideals, find expression in them. Every century drops some forms of dogmatic statement, because they have become repugnant to the moral sense of the people, or incredible to their wider intellectual vision. This is the process which a stupid conservatism vainly seeks to arrest. It is common to hear modifications of this nature attributed to unsure grasp of the truth being that these are proofs of the living presence of God in his church and in his world. It is what He has been doing in the hearts and the lives of men that has made these changes necessary. The history of the doctrine of the Atonement will make this plain.

In the first two or three centuries there was but little theorizing about the work of Christ. Those old Fathers recognized Christ as a Saviour; they trusted him, and followed him, and found the way

to peace and strength by a living fellowship with him. As to the explanation of all this they did not seem to care. Irenæus, who taught in the last half of the second century, says that through sin man had become alienated from God, and that Christ became man in order to reunite God and man. The theoretical fabric in this teaching is slight. Christ reduces us and reconciles us to God, but just how he does not try to tell. He does, however, use the word "ransom," — a word which was destined in the next thousand years to play a large part in the development of the theory of the Atonement. So far as the early church had a theory of the work of Christ, this theory of ransom was most widely accepted as the explanation. There were those who criticised it as morally unsound, but their objections did not prevail.

The theory is based on a word which Jesus used once, when he said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;" and which Paul used once, when he spoke of Jesus as having given himself as "a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). The words "redeem" and "redemption" do, however, convey the same idea, and they are found frequently in the New Testament. A ransom is a sum of money paid to a captor for the release of a captive or prisoner. He who pays the ransom is called the redeemer; the act is redemption. When Christ, or the blood of Christ, began to be spoken of as a ransom, those who wished to understand the

meaning of the words they were using began to ask to whom this ransom was paid, and who paid it. The answer, which was first spoken rather hesitatingly, but afterward came to be affirmed with confidence, was that the ransom was given to Satan, and that it was paid him by God, for the release of the human race from bondage to the Prince of Evil. The theory was that man by the fall had passed under the power of the devil; the devil had thus gained a legal right to humanity, a right which God himself was bound to respect. To dispossess him of his captives a ransom must be paid. Satan accepted the person of Christ as the ransom, and thus lost his claim upon the race. As formulated in the fourth century by Gregory of Nyssa, Hagenbach thus summarizes it:[1] "Men have become slaves of the devil by sin. Jesus offered himself to the devil as the ransom which should release all others. The crafty devil assented because he cared more for this one Jesus, so much superior to them, than for all the rest. But notwithstanding his craft he was deceived, since he could not retain Jesus in his power. It was, as it were, a deception on the part of God (*δόλος τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἐχθρόν*) that Jesus veiled his divine nature, which the devil would have feared, by means of his humanity, and thus deceived the devil by the appearance of flesh. But Gregory allows such a deception according to the *tor fallacia*; the devil had first deceived men, for the purpose of seducing them; but the design of God in deceiving the devil was a good one, viz., to

redeem mankind. Gregory's argument looks very much like the well-known maxim that 'the end justifies the means.' This dramatic representation of the subject includes, however, that other more profound idea, carried out with much ingenuity in many of the wondrous legends of the Middle Ages, that the devil, notwithstanding his subtilty, is at last outwitted by the wisdom of God, and appears in the comparison as a stupid devil.[1]

That, by the way, is a very profound truth. It is the beginning of wisdom to believe that the devil is a fool, that is to say, that concentrated selfishness and malice is the essence of stupidity. So far these old theologians were right. But what a conception is this of the work of salvation! What kind of moral sense had the men who could conceive of God as entering into a transaction of this sort? What kind of a deity is this who is reduced to the necessity of playing a sharp trick to get the advantage of the devil? The figures used by these theologians are so grotesque that it is difficult to quote them without incurring the charge of treating sacred themes with levity. But it is needful that we should know through what planes of human misconception and moral confusion this truth of the Atonement has passed. One of the favorite figures was that of the fish-hook. The divine nature of Christ was the hook; his human nature — his flesh — was the bait; Satan bit at the bait without seeing the hook. Peter Lombard prefers

[1] *History of Doctrine*, § 134.

the figure of a trap, of which the flesh was the bait. The general conception is that Satan was in some way outwitted in the transaction. This man Christ Jesus was undermining his kingdom; he must get possession of him as his archenemy; to secure him he was willing to let go his legal claim on the race, and when he had secured him he could not hold him; he could torture and kill his body, but the divine nature escaped his clutches, and rose from the dead to lead the emancipated race out of its bondage.

Origen varies this interpretation by explaining the escape of Christ from the power of the devil as a moral rather than a miraculous transaction. It was not because his divinity overpowered the adversary that he got free; it was because his nature was Logos, and the devil could not endure the presence of a benevolent spirit and was glad to let him go. Some of the later Fathers explain the Atonement, not as a ransom, but as a combat between Christ and Belial, in which the latter was overthrown and compelled to surrender his prey. This is not, in their conception, a merely figurative battle, but a real duel, in which the Son of God was victorious over the Prince of this world.

For fully a thousand years this idea of the Atonement as consisting in the rescue of the human race from the dominion of the devil, either by outwitting or overpowering him, was the prevailing theory in the church. There were men who did not wholly accept it, men to whom its moral crudity was

repulsive; but the great majority of devout people knew no other explanation of the work of Christ, and to call in question this account of his mission exposed one to the gravest suspicions of heresy. When Abelard, in the twelfth century, ventured to question whether the devil really had any rights in the human race, and whether any such transaction as this for their release ever took place, that great hero of the faith, St. Bernard, declared that a man who disputed a doctrine so essential as this should not be reasoned with, but chastised with rods.

Nevertheless, the explanation gradually became incredible. As men's ideas of justice and honor and probity were elevated and purified, it became evident that the relations and motives and practices ascribed to God in these theories were impossible. The explanation ceased to explain. It involved the whole subject in darkness rather than light.

Other explanations were attempted. Chief among these was that of Anselm. In this theory the devil wholly disappears; the figure of ransom is dropped, and the figure of debt takes its place. Obedience is the honor which man owes to God; the disobedience of the race has involved humankind in hopeless debt. For past sin present obedience cannot atone; how can that debt be cleared away? Christ as the God man perfectly obeys the law; to that he was bound. But his sinless death was not due; no obligation required that of him;

and by giving his life he wrought a great work of supererogation and accumulated a fund of surplus merit, infinite in amount, out of which he pays the debts of all believers.[1] This is known as the commercial theory. In Anselm's exposition it is somewhat less bald than in my abbreviated statement, yet in its best form it is a dismal travesty of the great fact which it seeks to explain. How can one moral being, by unmerited suffering, accumulate a fund of virtue out of which the moral obligations of other moral beings can be discharged? Moral obligations cannot be transferred from one to another after this manner. Yet this theory lingers in some of our hymns, and still vitiates much of our thinking on this transcendent theme.

Following this came the purely legal conception, — the theory of a legal or penal substitution. The penalty of sin is death; all men have sinned and are exposed to the penalty; Christ voluntarily endures the penalty, in our stead, and thus secures our salvation. This theory made room for Universalism. The original Universalists argued that sin could not be punished twice; and that since Christ bore the penalty for all, all must go free. That seems a logical inference. The later Universalists, I need not say, have based their belief in the final salvation of all men upon other reasonings than these.

There has always been difficulty in explaining this theory. To begin with, the transfer of penalty is essentially unjust and unmoral. That the

substitute consents does not acquit the judge of injustice. Governments can tolerate no such transactions. Moreover, we are told that the penalty of sin is death. What kind of death? All kinds of death, the answer is; everything that the word means, — physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Did Christ suffer all these? Yes, said some of the old theologians. They would follow their logic. His body died on the cross; he was separated from God and left in utter spiritual darkness; he suffered the literal pains of hell in his soul. Lather said that Christ became, for our sakes, a thief, a murderer, an adulterer, and took the whole penalty of the law upon himself.

But from this horrible doctrine men began to recoil. That Christ could have actually endured the penalty of our sins was incredible. Part of the penalty of sin — the bitterest part of it — is remorse; could he have felt remorse? In what sense could the pains of hell have been inflicted on him? There never was a moment when his thought was not pure, when his conscience was not clear, when his heart was not full of love to every creature. Can such a spirit suffer the pains of hell? The real penalty of sin is spiritual death, and that means depraved appetites, embruted passions, corroding animalism, rampant selfishness, disinterested malice. What is the condition in which sin bringeth forth when it is finished, if Is it not monstrous to say that Jesus Christ ever experienced anything like this? If he did not, then it

is absurd to say that he suffered the penalty of sin. This theory, in its turn, became incredible. Men saw that all moral standards were confounded and perverted by saying that Christ endured the penalty of the law as our substitute. It was not the penalty of the law; it could not have been, they said; it must have been something else; what was it?

To this the great Dutch jurist, Grotius, made reply in what has since been known as the governmental theory, that the sufferings inflicted on Christ were not penal, but illustrative. They are intended as an impressive exhibition of God's hatred of sin. To the spectacle of the cross God seems to be pointing all sinners, saying to them, "Thus ought you to suffer. This Being does not deserve to suffer, and his sufferings do not signify any wrath on my part; but he has consented to endure them, and I am inflicting them upon him, in the presence of the universe, in order that all may see how greatly I abhor sin."

This theory was meant to relieve the imputation upon the justice of God involved in the theory of penal substitution. To some minds it still affords such relief. But there are many who have ceased to find any satisfaction in it. If it is not unmoral, it is essentially unreal — even theatrical. To treat one who is not a sinner as though he were a sinner in order that sinners may see how they ought to be treated, does not seem to comport with the dignity and directness of the divine administration. To

many minds this explanation has ceased to be credible.

For myself I must say that all these attempts to interpret the work of Christ by judicial and forensic and governmental analogies seem to me very lame and impotent. Governmental figures may be used in dealing with them, if only we remember that they are figures, and do not proceed to harden them into theories. The apostles use these figures; aspects of the work of salvation may be shadowed forth by them. But when we attempt to make philosophical boundaries out of them we are as far astray as one would be who undertook to deduce the anatomy of a skylark from Shelley's poem. In truth the ethical and spiritual values with which we are concerned in trying to tell what Christ has done for men can never be expressed in terms of human jurisprudence. When we reason from what such human rulers as we know think it expedient for them to do in dealing with offenders to what the Infinite Wisdom and Love will do in reclaiming his wandering children we are not going on firm ground. Many things are authorized by legislatures and done by courts and magistrates which the Eternal Justice could never tolerate. In all our criminal courts, for example, penalty may be commuted with money. There are many offenses for which the rich man goes free, while the poor man goes to jail. He who possesses or can borrow the money to pay his fine walks abroad; he who has neither purse nor friend must submit to the treat-

ment of a malefactor. This whole institution of fines is utterly and abominably unjust, albeit we call it justice. The day will come when we shall abolish all such iniquities, and when the rich man will be compelled to take the same kind of punishment that the poor man must endure. But such ethical anomalies still appear in our jurisprudence; and it is precisely upon conditions of this sort that some of the forensic theories of the Atonement are founded. We ought to be admonished that such analogies will lead us astray.

Indeed, it should be said that all the recent manœuvres in theological science have abandoned these governmental theories as inadequate. I have been looking over Professor Fisher's abstracts of the teaching of such great evangelical theologians as Nitzsch and Rothe and Julius Müller, and I cannot find that any of them teach that the sufferings of Christ were judicially inflicted upon him by the Father, for the vindication of justice or the commanion of government. To show how greatly the view of the church has changed, let me quote a few words from the last Professor of Systematic Theology in Andover, Professor George Harris:—

"The doctrine which has undergone the greatest modification from purely ethical influences is the doctrine of redemption from sin. Until recently the usual representations of atonement were justly open to the charge of immorality. Even now such representations continue to be made to a considerable degree. The moral sense is shocked at some

of the reasons given for atonement. The imputation of our sins to Christ has been so stated that it seemed as if all regard for righteousness had been overlooked. The penal suffering of Christ was regarded as the philosophy of atonement. It was believed that God laid on Christ the penalty of our sins, or a suffering equivalent to that penalty. The atonement was represented as an arrangement satisfactory to God, but incomprehensible to us. The fact that character and its consequences cannot be transferred from one person to another was contradicted by the theory that Christ suffered what we otherwise should have suffered. . . . The love of Christ making its great way to men at the cost of suffering is the motive which lends men to repentance, but has been represented as the motive which induces God to forgive. This disapproving theory fails to satisfy because it is immoral, because it places salvation somewhere else than in character, because it converts the sympathy and love of Christ into legal fictions, because it places the ethical demands of justice above the ethical necessities of love. It is, indeed, through the self-sacrifice of Christ that we are recovered from self-shamus to goodness and love. He bore our sins. He suffered on account of our sins. He brings us back to God, for he reveals God to us in his real character. But that is very different from mercantile or forensic transference of the penalty of sin from one person to another. When the doctrine of atonement is traced through its successive phases,

as a ransom paid to the devil, as the satisfaction of justice, as the vindication of divine government, and finally as the great motive power which transforms character, it is seen that there has been a progressive moral evolution. The doctrine of redemption through sacrifice remains, but is no longer made to rest on an unethical philosophy."[1]

It is evident that not much is left of the theories of the Atonement which the church has fabricated through the ages. But the fact may remain though the theories pass. There have been a good many theories of light since the days of Parmenides of Elea, most of which have gone into the junk-pile of the discarded philosophies; but the light of heaven is just as blessed a reality to-day as it was when the Magians worshiped it upon the Persian hills, and the poets praised its beauty on the sunny plains of ancient Greece. And it is well to remember that while doctrines change their forms, just as the natural forces do, the essential truth which they embody endures from generation to generation. There are many transformations of spiritual and moral energy, as they appear in the intellectual world, but there is also a conservation of energy. The people who witness the transformation of the mode often imagine that they are witnessing an extinction of the force, and go away shouting that Christianity is dead. No man is apt to be more utterly oblivious of the great facts of evolution than your ranting religious radical.

[1] *Moral Evolution*, pp. 407, 408.

His notion is that progress consists in an interminable series of blottings out and fresh beginnings; the manner in which one thing grows out of another, in which life and thought are conserved by changes of form and transmitted from one generation to another and from one institution to another, he is totally incapable of conceiving. The last man to understand the doctrine of evolution appears to be the suggestive teacher who assumes that he has a monopoly of liberalism.

The forms of the doctrine of the Atonement have greatly changed, no doubt; but under these forms precious and immutable truths abide. It cannot at this time enter into the interpretation of the Scripture texts which have been supposed to teach the doctrine of expiation; but one principle of interpretation may be suggested which will throw light on many of them. There is a common mode of speech by which our own feelings are attributed to objects outside of ourselves; as when we speak of a cheerful room, meaning that there is something in the appearance of the room which makes us feel cheerful; or when we speak of a dizzy height, meaning that we are dizzy when we stand upon it. The objective is then often put for the subjective. What is in our own feeling, we transfer to the object which excites it. There is the common phenomenon of parallax, also, by which the heavens seem to move, when it is we who are moving. The star that was over our right shoulder a little while ago is now over our left shoulder; it seems to have

moved through a large arc; but the truth is that there has been a turning in our road. So men naturally ascribe to God changes that have taken place in themselves. They were disobedient and had the consciousness of alienation from Him; they are now in filial relations with Him, and it is natural for them to think that the frown upon his face has changed into a smile, that wrath has turned to love. But the change is not in Him; it is in themselves. They may speak of his anger being appeased, because that describes their own feeling. The relation has changed, but the change is in them. And the Scriptures often take up this natural and popular way of speaking, and represent God as being angry and having his anger turned away. Such expressions must be taken for just what they are worth, as the natural and familiar forms of human speech, not as scientific statements of the truth about God.

What is it, then, that Jesus Christ has done for us men and our salvation?

First he has revealed God to us. Whatever else we may say about him, this must be admitted by all who have any faith in his words, in what he said about himself, that he was the revelation or manifestation of the living God to men. He said of himself what no other sane man has ever said, "I and my Father are one." He came to show us the Father. "He that hath seen me," he said, "hath seen the Father." What he says and does and suffers represents to us the divine thought and

feeling respecting our sins, our needs, and our destinies.

This revelation which is made in the person of Jesus Christ brings God very near to us. We see this Son of God entering into all our human experiences, toiling, hungering, thirsting, rejoicing, weeping: we hear him calling himself the Son of man, and it is borne into our minds that the chasm which our thought had made between divinity and humanity does not exist; that we are, indeed, what Jesus always calls us, the children of our Father in heaven.

This identification of himself with us is such a revelation of God's love for us as never could have been made in any other way. For it involves constant suffering and sacrifice, — self-sacrifice. And the only convincing manifestation of love is that which is revealed in self-sacrifice. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." We cannot doubt his sympathy with us, his compassion for us. Such a revelation of love is fitted to overcome the enmity and alienation of the human heart, and to bring men back to God in contrition and trust.

But the sufferings of Christ reveal something more than the love of God for men, they reveal also his hatred of sin. For in order that men may be saved, it is needful not only that they be enabled to understand God's love for them, but also that they be taught to share his wrath against the sin which is destroying them. To human beings in

their present environment these two experiences are essential to salvation,—love of the good and hatred of the evil. I cannot save myself unless I hate the wrong in myself as cordially as I love the right. I cannot save my fellow man unless I have the same wrath against the evil that is destroying him. In order that we may be restored to communion with a holy God we must recoil from the sin which He abhors as cordially as we draw nigh to the purity and truth which He loves. Jesus Christ, as the manifestation of God, brings this truth home to the hearts of men with saving power. This subject is so vast we cannot, within the limits of one short chapter, get anything more than a glimpse of it. An illustration used by Dr. J. M. Whiton may suggest the truth :—

"We see a loving wife, cleaving to her drunken husband to save him at all cost to herself. She might be comfortable in her father's house, but she makes herself the redeeming partner of a soulful life whose evil nature she bears, whose polluted breath she breathes, while she feels in every fibre of her suffering spirit the woe and shame. Through this vicarious suffering perhaps she accomplishes her redeeming work, rouses the torpid conscience to conviction, repentance, reparation. What is it then which educates and energizes his conscience? The evil consequences of his sin, not to him, *but to her*. It is her vicarious sacrifice, not in his stead, but in his place, *with him*, as well as for him, that gives his conscience the just estimate of his sin, and

clothes it with power to break the accursed chain. Thus Christ '*bore our sins*,' in fellowship with us, not in substitution for us. The vicarious suffering which we in various ways bear with and for one another, he bore for all sinners as their redeeming partner in the retributive evils of their sin, to rouse, teach, energize conscience to an invincible hatred of it, and a victorious struggle with it. But this is not the propitiation of conscience; rather is it preparatory thereto.

"For when we contemplate our sin with a thoroughly awakened conscience, what truly contrite spirit is there who does not feel, with the tenderhearted and penitent child, that he *cannot be sorry enough?* There is not only the overt act of sin to be condemned. There is also the evil root of it in the evil dispositions and habits which the overt sin has fostered. There is more sin within us than shows at any moment. Our feelings seem too dull. Our confessions seem too weak. We crave a power of expression we do not find within us, to blind upon our sin the burden of condemnation it deserves in the judgment of the Father we have grieved and offended.

"Consider now the case of him whom the long-suffering constancy of conjugal devotion has awakened from drunken dreams, and reclaimed from sottish squalor, and rehabilitated in sober manhood. It is not enough for him to pour upon his vices merely *his own detestation*. He longs to condemn his sin with such execration as only an

unstained virtue can cherish for it. Such hatred of sin as only she can feel whose purity has for his sake endured contact with its pollution he fain would borrow from her and share with her. Putting himself into her place he endeavors to think her thought, to feel her feeling about it. Nor does he feel that in her view he has made the atonement of an adequate repentance until, in the full accord of their mutual love and moral sympathy, her abhorrence of his sin has become his own. Then and then he is satisfied because she is satisfied. And if he should say, How can I ever make amends? she would reply, You have made all the amends I ever sought. You are at one with me. I am satisfied to see you abhor your sin as I abhor it. Thus is she his propitiation. Thus we may approach the conception of that propitiation in conscience which is the atoning work of Christ.

This is only a fragment, an outline, I know, of that great work of spiritual revelation, and reconciliation, and renovation which is wrought out for us and in us in the life and the sufferings of Him who came to show us the Father and to save us from our sins. But it may help us to see that there is something more in this work of Christ than the mere exhibition of pity for us. The abhorrence of the sin that curses us is not less clearly shown. It was this that broke his heart in Gethsemane. This being true, you think Jesus could have felt as he felt the onset of the world's selfishness and madness, then rushing upon him to destroy him,

simply because he was unselfish and sane. He could not but have been overwhelmed with abhorrence of the terrible outbreak of the sin of the world which he was there confronting. Yet he loved the men who were seeking his life, and longed to save them. It was this struggle between the suffering of a pure spirit on account of sin and the love that cannot let the sinner go which wrung from him the bloody sweat of the garden. This was the true divine propitiation, — the reconciliation through suffering of holiness with love. And it is by bringing us into the same travail with himself; by filling us with his own abhorrence of sin; by bringing us to look upon the selfishness and animalism of our own lives with his eyes, and to realize them as he recalled them from, that he saves us. "The world's unrighteousness," says the great German theologian Carl Immanuel Nitzsch, "spends itself upon the Holy and Righteous One, completes and exhausts itself. He endures it in the glory of his innocence, in order by his spirit to punish it upon us. Only as the power and possibility of an actual release from sin, of our dying with Him and rising in a new life, does he suffer death in our place and make himself an offering to God. Only thus is he a ransom for many. It is in the depths of his sympathy and in the endeavor for the world's salvation that he bears the penalty of its sin." [1]

Here are elements with which we must reckon

[1] Quoted by *Fisher, Hist. Christian Doctrine*, p. 516.

in all our dealings with the evil in ourselves, in all our efforts to save others. Gethsemane is the warning against an easy, good-natured theory of moral evil. We must not go about telling ourselves that we are pretty good fellows after all, and that God is so infinitely benevolent that He does not greatly care about our meannesses and iniquities. No! We must see our sin as Christ sees it; we must hate it as he hated it. Dr. Lyman Abbott is right when he says: "We shall never enter into the mystery of redemption unless we enter in some measure into these two experiences of wrath and pity and into the mystery of their reconciliation. . . . The Old Theology has grievously erred in personifying these two experiences, in attributing all the hate and wrath to the Father and all the pity and compassion to the Son. But the New Theology will still more grievously err if it leaves either the wrath or the pity out of its estimate of the divine nature, or fails to see and teach that reconciliation is the reconciliation of a great pity with a great wrath, the issue of which is a great mercy and a great redemption."[1]

[1] *The Theology of an Evolutionist*, p. 133.

X

PREDESTINATION

Probably no other doctrine of theology has occupied so large a place in the thought of the modern church as that which we are now to consider. What with affirming it and denying it, modifying it and explaining it, trying to believe it and trying to disbelieve it, finding comfort in it and falling into despair in view of it, a great many millions of believers have spent a large share of their intellectual energy. There have always been those who believed it and defended it, and there have always been those who rejected it and assailed it as an impediment to faith and a libel on the divine character.

Very early in the history of the church the theologians began to wrestle with it; the words of the Apostle Paul, in the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians, seemed to affirm the doctrine of predestination, and the Fathers, in their exposition of his writings, were compelled to consider the question how far the predeterminations of the Creator affect the characters and the destiny of his creatures. Most of those earlier Fathers reasonably took these statements of Paul merely as strong

affirmations of the doctrine of divine providence. The Greek teachers generally insist upon the freedom of the human will as the foundation of virtue, and make that the foundation of theology. It is the single truth that during the first three centuries the notion that the destiny of all men is fixed before the creation by a divine decree scarcely found place in the teachings of the church. Calvin himself acknowledges this; he can only explain it by the assumption that the minds of these early Fathers were not properly illuminated.

It was not until the beginning of the fifth century that Augustin, the great Latin theologian, gave to the doctrine of predestination its dogmatic form. The doctrine was of course organically connected with the doctrine of original sin, — the doctrine that the whole human race stood in Adam, and are guilty and punishable with him, having no power to repent, and being doomed, unless God shall intervene, to endless misery. Augustin shrank from saying, what some in later years were bold to say, that God decreed the sin of Adam; he only said that God permitted it. But the notion that God had bound Adam and all his posterity together indissolubly, so that the guilt of the ancestor is inherited and shared by all his descendants, he does teach in the most unequivocal manner. If Adam was not predestined to sin, all his posterity were predestined to be partakers of the guilt of his sin, and of the moral weakness and inability to all good which it entailed. Out of

this mass of depravity, God determined, from all eternity, that He would save some. "Before the foundation of the world," Augustine says, "God chose us in Christ, predestinating us to the adoption of sons; not because He saw that we *would* be pure and sinless, but that we *might* be. Moreover, He did this according to the pleasure of his will, that no man might glory in his own will, but rather in God's will."[1] The number of the elect, he says, is fixed and certain, so that it can neither be increased nor diminished by anything that man can do. These are Augustine's words; Hagenbach summarizes his teaching thus: "God, in consequence of an eternal decree, and without any reference to the future conduct of man, has elected some out of the corrupt mass to become vessels of his mercy (*vasa misericordiæ*), and left the rest, as vessels of his wrath (*vasa iræ*), to a just condemnation. Augustine called the former *predestinatio*, the latter *reprobatio*."[2]

The line of Augustine was sharply attacked by Pelagius, who asserted the freedom of the will and denied the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. But Pelagius went as far astray in that direction as Augustine had gone in the other; for he practically denied the facts of heredity, and so understated the need of divine help in overcoming sin as to make man practically independent of his Maker. With all its exaggerations, Augustine's

[1] *De Prod. Sanctorum*, 37 (C. 18).

[2] *Hist. of Doctrine*, § 113.

theory came nearer to the facts of human experience than did that of Pelagius; and if either of the two theories must prevail, it was better that that of Augustine should have the ascendency. His view it was, in the main, which was carried over by the Western church. There was much dissent, and there were many controversies, but the Augustinian theology remained the standard of Orthodoxy until the time of the Reformation.

Luther was not always logical, and he often gives utterance to inconsistent views. Indeed, we might say of him, as of many others, that his inconsistencies often are the best part of his teaching. But he was, nevertheless, a strenuous predestinationist; no one has ever more vehemently asserted the absolute despotism of the divine will. "In his battle with Erasmus," says Professor Fisher, "Luther affirmed in almost reckless language the impotence of the human will. God's agency was asserted to be the universal cause. His will was declared to be subject to no law, but to be itself foundation of right. Predestination was declared to be unconditional, and to include as its objects the lost as well as the saved. "By this thunderbolt,' he said, 'free will is laid low and utterly crushed.'"[1]

Calvin is not less positive; indeed, he is much more consistently rigid in his enforcement of the dogma. "According to Calvin," says Professor Fisher, "God determined by an eternal decree

[1] *Hist. of Christian Doctrine*, p. 392.

'what He would have to become of every individual of mankind.' Eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. 'Every one is created for one or the other of these ends.' God has once for all determined 'whom He would admit to salvation and whom He would condemn to destruction.' Prescience does not explain the hardening of heart which includes an intervention of God, beyond mere foreknowledge. It takes place first by the withdrawal of God's spirit, and secondly by the employment of Satan, the minister of his wrath, to influence their mind and their efforts. To inquire into the reasons of the divine will is idle; for 'there is nothing greater or higher than the will of God.' It 'is the cause of everything that exists.'[1]

Edwards also affirmed this doctrine with the strongest emphasis. He held that the sovereignty of God is absolute, that every choice of man is decreed by God. God is the only cause. Everything that is done is done by Him.

The doctrine of predestination known to the modern church receives its clearest expression in the great Westminster Assembly's Confession and catechisms, which are still the standards of doctrine of the Presbyterian Church. The same Confession was adopted by assemblies of the Congregationalists of England and of the United States; and while Congregationalism does not admit any authoritative creed as binding on all the churches,

[1] *Hist. of Christian Doctrine*, p. 300.

this one was recognized, until a recent date, by most Congregationalists as expressing the substance of Christian doctrine. One hundred years ago it would have been hard to find a Congregational minister who would have dissented from the teaching of his creed respecting predestination; even in my boyhood there were few who did not heartily believe it.

This Confession begins by asserting that God from all eternity, "by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, did freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."[1] If this seems like a contradiction in terms, we must not too sharply censure it, for doubtless the subject is one respecting which it is not easy to preserve logical consistency. The inconsistencies of this Confession are the best proof of it. Unfortunately, when the theologians went on to define exactly what this doctrine means they used language which makes all these assertions of freedom utterly meaningless and even preposterous. For example:—

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

"These angels and men, thus predestinated and

[1] Chap. iii.

foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."[1]

The next article strenuously denies that this election was based on any foresight of good in those thus chosen; it was a perfectly arbitrary decree.

Such is, for substance, the doctrine of predestination as it has been held and taught in the Christian church for fifteen centuries. Two or three implications of the doctrine deserve our consideration.

The first is the fate of the non-elect infants. For predestinism, in the days of its vigor, never stammered in its assertion of the fact that among those passed by and left to perish were multitudes of infants. This is logically involved in the doctrine. The belief that all infants dying in infancy are saved can no more be reconciled with this doctrine of unconditional predestination than light can be reconciled with darkness. It is true that those who now profess to believe in the doctrine of election do almost all believe that infants dying in infancy are saved; but they trample all their logic under foot when they thus make room for the children. And this relenting of the old theology is but recent. I have heard Presbyterian ministers and Congregational ministers deny that anybody ever believed in the damnation of any infants; but one must blush for the ignorance of the theologian who makes such

[1] Chap. iii.

a statement. How obstinately he must have shut his eyes to the facts that blaze upon the pages of the history of doctrine! Augustine clearly taught that some infants were sent to perdition: he lays it down as a postulate in one of his arguments; it does not need to be proved, it can be assumed as undoubted. Calvin taught it in the most unmistakable terms, over and over. "I ask again," he says, "how it is that the fall of Adam involves so many nations with their infant children in eternal death without remedy, unless that so it seemed meet to God." All the heathen, and all their infant children, were consigned by the decree of God to perdition. This was one of the foundation stones of the Calvinistic doctrine.

Not long after Calvin's day there was a revolt in the Low Countries against the Calvinistic doctrine, led by Jacob Arminius; the Remonstrants, as they were called, were the founders of that theological school which has been most vigorously represented by Wesley and the Methodists. It was they who began to deny this doctrine of unconditional predestination, and along with it the doctrine of infant damnation. To check this revolt, the Synod of Dort was called in 1618; and the predestinationists of all the European countries came together to agree upon a manifesto by which their doctrine should be cleared and confirmed. Much was said in that synod about the infants; and while it was agreed that many infants are saved, either by the divine decree, or by their covenant relation with

godly parents, I cannot find that any theologian of that synod expressed his belief in the salvation of all infants.

Zwingli, the great Swiss reformer, had before this day avowed that faith; but Zwingli was something of a heretic; his hopes for the little children were not shared by many of his brethren.

The Westminster Assembly's Confession deals with the subject in a manner inferential, but unmistakable. "Elect infants," it affirms, "dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by the operation of the Spirit." The implication is that there are non-elect infants who die in infancy and who are not saved. Many attempts have been made to explain away this language, but no man who does not wish to proclaim his ignorance should engage in such an enterprise. If you want to know what those divines thought about this subject read their writings. They have put themselves on record in many treatises and sermons, in which they unhesitatingly declare that all infants will be saved. Indeed, it was a cardinal point of doctrine with every one of them that all the infants of the heathen dying in infancy went to eternal perdition. William Twisse, the prolocutor or president of the Assembly, says: "Many thousands, even all the infants of Turkes and Sarazens dying in original sin are tormented in hell fire." Many others of the leaders of the Assembly, even of the committee which reported this article, are equally explicit. Professor Briggs says: "We are able to say that the

Westminster divines were unanimous on this question of the salvation of *elect infants* only. We have examined the greater part of the writings of the Westminster divines, and have not been able to find any different opinion from the extracts we have given. The Presbyterian churches have departed from their standards on this question, and it is simple honesty to acknowledge it. We are at liberty to amend the Confession, but we have no right to distort it and to pervert its grammatical and historical meaning.[1]

It is rather curious, I think, that any one who professes to believe in the doctrine of unconditional predestination as applied to adults should hesitate to believe in the damnation of infants. For it is the very substance of the doctrine that every adult individual of the non-elect was a damned infant the moment he drew his first breath. He came into the world with this curse upon him. He was one of that fixed number of the reprobate which can neither be increased nor diminished by anything that men or angels can do. It was never for one moment possible for him to escape from the doom which had been determined for him from all eternity. The most merciful thing that could possibly happen to him, therefore, would be to send him straight to hell from his mother's arms. For it is by all these theologians admitted that the sinner waxes worse the older he grows, and that the more he sins the heavier will be his penalty: if

[1] *Webster* p. 186.

this infant lives to maturity or old age, he will only heap up wrath against the day of wrath; the sooner he is removed from the earth the lighter will be the weight of his everlasting torment. The non-elect who are sent to hell in their infancy are the most mercifully treated of all the non-elect.

The certain perdition of all the heathen is also, as several of these citations have shown, a distinct corollary of this doctrine of predestination as it has been preached and believed in past centuries. The Westminster Confession most emphatically denies that "men not professing the Christian religion can be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess;" and it passionately declares that "to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious and to be detested."

Let us see, now, if we can fairly and calmly state this doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, which has been taught by so many of the great theologians; which has been believed by hundreds of millions of devout men, by some of the greatest and best men that have lived in the world, and which stands to-day uncontradicted and unqualified in the creeds of some of the great religious denominations.

1. In the counsels of eternity God determined to create man and subject him to temptation under which it was probable that he would fall. Some of the theologians say that God decreed the sin;

others shrink from this and declare that the decree is concerned with what followed the fall, not with what preceded it.

2. It is certain, however, that such a relation was established between our first parent and his offspring that if he should fall, the moral taint of his sin and the guilt of it would be transmitted to all his progeny; so that every one of them would come into life "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil," — so that from the hour of his birth every human being would be helpless to save himself, and would be "bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal."

3. From eternity, before the worlds were created, God determined that he would select from this weltering mass of moral inability and misery a certain fixed and definite number whom he would save. To this number, from the moment when the decree was formed, not one name could be added, and from it not one could be subtracted. The exact population of heaven and of hell was fixed long before the foundation of the world.

4. Those thus chosen were selected by a purely arbitrary choice, a choice which had absolutely nothing to do with their prospective merit or demerit.

5. Those not thus chosen were, from all eternity, foredoomed to eternal misery. "The rest of man-

kind," says the Confession, "God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

6. Just what proportion of the race is elected and saved, and what proportion is reprobated and consigned to eternal torment, we do not know; but the great Confession tells us plainly that all the heathen and all their offspring are lost, and these, up to the present day, constitute an overwhelming majority of the race. If what the Larger Catechism tells us is true, that "they who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ and believe not in him cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature or the law of that religion they profess," there must be hundreds of billions of souls in hell today. And the population of that place must be growing, pretty rapidly. Something like fifteen hundred millions of human beings are living on this planet; of these perhaps fifty millions die every year; not one fourth of them have heard the gospel or know of Jesus Christ; from thirty to forty millions every year must, if this doctrine is true, go down to that pit. What a population must swarm to-day in that vast land of eternal night! For history, as we are forced to read it to-day, carries back the period during which our

race has inhabited the planet far beyond the six thousand years of the old conjectural chronology; one hundred thousand years, some of the thinkers say, is a more probable term. "The countless silent centuries that lie behind recorded history," says Dr. Gordon, "are to-day one of the most touching, fascinating, and bewildering objects of thought. They have at last risen from their long sleep, they have finally found recognition."[1] Of course all these, if we are to accept the implicit and unqualified statements of these old confessions, have been consigned to hopeless and endless misery. Well may we cry with Whittier:—

> "O the generations old
> Over whom no church-bells tolled;
> Christless, lifting up blind eyes
> To the silence of the skies!
> For the innumerable dead
> Is my soul dissatisfied.
>
> "Where be now those silent hosts?
> Where the camping ground of ghosts?
> Where the spectral cosmorys hid
> To the white tents of the dead?
> What strange shore or shoreless sea,
> Holds the awful mystery?"

Finally, we are told that all this is done by the Creator, to illustrate his "glorious justice": which men are bound to praise. These uncounted billions of the non-elect now in eternal torment were brought into being by Him; they had no option about being born; it was his creative fiat that gave

[1] *The Christ of To-Day*, p. 35.

them life. They came into being under a constitution which He had foreordained, and by means of which every one of them from the moment of his birth was foreloomed to a life of sin in this world and an eternity of misery. It was not for anything that they had done that they were born sinners, and found themselves in helpless bondage to a bad heredity: it was not for anything that they had done or failed to do that they were passed by and left to perish in that misery; but it is all done to the praise of his glorious justice!

And this is the Being who by many devout men has been called God, and worshiped!

Is this doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation believed to-day? I do not think that it is believed by fairly educated Christian men of any denomination. It would be difficult to find any Protestant who would confess his belief that any infant, whether of heathen or Christian parentage, is sent to endless punishment on account of Adam's sin; and the men are growing scarce who will admit the truth of the doctrine that no heathen who has not heard of Christ can possibly be saved. The salvation of all infants dying in infancy is almost universally believed by Protestant Christians. But that admission pulverizes the predestination logic. For if the unconditional damnation of non-elect infants is unjust, the unconditional damnation of non-elect adults is, as I have already shown, ten times more unjust. And therefore this system of thought has not and cannot

have any real hold upon the thought of the race. The moral sense of mankind is in rebellion against it. The churches which retain it in their confessions have simply moved away from it. The kind of Calvinism which is held and taught by most Presbyterian ministers to-day is no more the Calvinism of Calvin than the astronomy which is taught in our colleges to-day is the astronomy of Ptolemy. It is based on the righteousness or the love of God and not upon his sovereignty. The central idea of Augustinianism and Calvinism as philosophies of the universe is force. The central idea of all the theology that is taught to-day is righteousness. The fundamental explanation of everything under this predestinarian conception was God's will. The fundamental explanation now is God's character. The old theology was unmoral. The new theology — and by the new theology I mean that which is preached not only in Congregational pulpits, but in Presbyterian pulpits and Baptist pulpits, — in all the pulpits from which Calvinism was once preached — is substantially a moral theology.

Let me give you a few sentences from a recent book of Dr. Henry Van Dyke of New York. Dr. Van Dyke is the son of a man who was a leader of the Old School wing of the Presbyterian Church; he is himself a graduate of Princeton and a Doctor of Divinity by decoration of that ancient stronghold of orthodoxy; he was lately the pastor of one of the most conservative Old School Presbyterian

churches in New York city. Listen to him and see whether he believes in the Calvinism of Calvin:

"The Bible never says that faith is a gift. There is a voluntary element in it. It is something to be done by the exercise of an inward power. It is a coming of the soul to Christ; it is a following of the soul after him; it is the first step in a long course of spiritual activity. . . . Now there is not a line in all the teaching of Jesus that this first act of freedom is impossible for any soul to whom he speaks. He has no idea of an eternal predestination binding some to belief and others to unbelief, a secret decree including certain men in the kingdom and excluding others from it."

"I do not believe that there is a single passage in the Old Testament which contradicts Christ's doctrine of the real liberty of the soul. But if there were such a passage I would leave it forever alone as belonging to that knowledge which was in part, and which was done away when that which was perfect had come."

"If there is any validity whatever in our moral instincts, we need not hesitate to say that from our present point of view, which is for us the only one attainable, this theory of the absolute and unconditional sovereignty of God exercised by one law of necessity over all creatures is so far from being for God's glory that it is apparently for his shame and dishonor. As a matter of fact it has been, and still is, the most fertile mother of doubts.

. . . The idea of an irresponsible God ruling by an eternal and inflexible *fiat* over responsible men is a moral nightmare, under which humanity groans, and from which it struggles to awake, even though it should have to open its eyes upon the blank darkness of an unsearchable night. Between the unknowable God of agnosticism and the unlovable God of absolutism there is indeed little to choose. But the choice, such as it is, lies on the side of agnosticism. It is unspeakably better to doubt God's personality, his supremacy, his very being, than it is to doubt his eternal goodness and his moral integrity.'[1]

That is the kind of doctrine which is heard today in the strong, leading Presbyterian pulpits of this country,—and even stronger and braver teaching than this is heard in most of the Presbyterian pulpits of Scotland. How much is left in it of the old doctrine of unconditional predestination I will let you tell.

The whole grim, ghastly, appalling fabrication is built upon a deification of will. The central element of personality, men said, is the will. God's will must, then, be the foundation of theology. Take the principle of will, make it omnipotent and absolute, subordinate to it every other element of character, then deduce your theology from that principle, and you will have the Augustinian Calvinism.

The craving for a simplification of religious

[1] *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, p. 265.

theory — the search for a single principle by which everything can be explained — contributed to the supremacy of this doctrine. It does wonderfully simplify the confusions of life to make a single force, like the will of God, account for everything. But simplicity is sometimes sought at too great a cost; we attain unto it by ignoring about half the phenomena with which we have to deal.

Indeed, I think that the last word of philosophy threatens to put this determinism out of court. For it is the scientific people who have lately been preaching predestination most diligently. There is a stiff vein of materialistic philosophy which is just as fatalistic as Augustine or Calvin ever was. "It professes," says William James, "that those parts of the universe already laid down absolutely appoint and decree what the other parts shall be. The future has no ambiguous possibilities hid in its womb; the part we call the present is compatible with only one totality. Any other future complement than the one fixed from eternity is impossible. The whole is in each and every part, and welds it with the rest into an absolute unity, an iron block, in which there can be no equivocation or shadow of turning.

> "'With earth's first clay, they did the last man knead,
> And there of the last harvest sowed the seed,
> And the first morning of creation wrote
> What the last dawn of reckoning shall read.'" [1]

To the philosophic reply to this fatalism I can give

[1] *The Will to Believe*, p. 150.

no space in this chapter; let it suffice to say that the answer given by Professor James in the volume just quoted seems to me adequate.

With most of us the testimony of consciousness is probably sufficient. None of us can have any clearer evidence than that of our own consciousness, and there is none of us who is not every hour conscious of freedom, — absolutely sure that he has the power to do many things which he leaves undone, and to leave undone that which he is doing. The world is full of possibilities with which our choices connect themselves; we know that many paths open before us every day, and that there is vast difference between what we are and what we might have been. The modern scientific determinism, like the old religious predestination, is the creation of a stark logic which ignores fully half of the facts of life. The most distinguished of living English scientists recently spoke of "the demonstrated daily miracle of our human free will," as one of the undoubted facts which science could not explain but must assume.

It must, however, be said that this grim doctrine has done some good work in the world. There was never a hurricane or a flood which did not bring some blessings to mankind. Systems, like men, have what the French call the defects of their qualities: the best systems have their injurious influences, and the worst ones have beneficent influences.

It cannot be denied that Calvinism has strength-

oned the defenses of civil liberty. It has always been the enemy of absolutism in the state. It always stands up for the individual against hierarchies and tyrannies. "This man is in the hands of God," it says; "let him alone! Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." In fact, Calvinism made God such a tremendous tyrant that it was simply compelled to deny and resist all earthly tyrannies. And this has been, historically, a matter of immense consequence to the civilization of Europe and America.

Doubtless, also, in the development of the individual character, it has often wrought out the beautiful results of humility and trust in the divine power. This could not have been gained without emphasizing other attributes of God than that which Calvinism makes central; but the sense of dependence on God which it cultivates is a source of strength to all who fully experience it.

Take the case of Augustine. His theology really sprung from his experience. When his logic got to work upon it, it made a horrible idol out of it; but in its origin it was human and reasonable. It was his deep experience of his own weakness and sinfulness and need that led him to exalt the divine efficiency. His philosophy is only a logical overstatement, which amounts to a caricature, of a profound fact. But the fact is there — the human need, the divine bounty. Grace is not what Augustine figured it, — a vast, all-compelling energy,

which overbears and submerges and sweeps away the human personality in its resistless onset; it is rather the helper of our infirmities, the prompter of our better thoughts, the quickening influence that reinforces all that is best in us and makes us strong to achieve and overcome. We are saved by grace, and grace is help. The greatest fact in the creation of God is a fact of which this old philosophy never gained any adequate conception, — it is the creation of a free human personality. By the side of that, all the wonders of astronomy and physics sink into insignificance. Explain it we cannot, but here is the fact. The one wonderful thing, as Tennyson says, is, —

> "Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,
> But this main miracle that does act there,
> With power on things over act and on the world."

Having endowed man with freedom, God respects the work of his hands — let me rather say the offspring of his love; and forces he forever bids aside to appeal to this personality. The claims of reason, the impulses of affection, the dictates of righteousness, are the only powers that can rightly control his action. He is made for virtue, and there is no virtue where there is constraint. The kind of compulsion which the irresistible grace of the old theology assumed is a moral absurdity. Grace is help; and every human soul needs help, and must have it; there is no salvation without it. That is the real truth for which the Old Calvinism stood, the truth which it distorted, by its exaggera-

tions, until it made of God not an almighty Helper, but an almighty Tyrant. God's sovereignty is not the sovereignty of force, of will; it is the sovereignty of reason, of affection. "His sovereignty," says Dr. Van Dyke, "embraces human liberty as the ocean surrounds an island. His sovereignty upholds human liberty as the air upholds a flying bird. His sovereignty defends human liberty as the authority of a true king defends the liberty of his subjects, — nay, rather as the authority of a father tenderly and patiently respects and protects the spiritual freedom of his children, in order that they may learn to love and obey him gladly and of their own accord. For this is the end of God's sovereignty: that his kingdom may come; that his will may be done on earth, — not as it is done in the circling of the stars or in the blossoming of flowers, but as it is done in heaven, where created spirits freely strike the notes that blend in perfect harmony with the music of the divine spirit."[1]

[1] *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, p. 271.

XI

CONVERSION

The fact of degeneration is not disputed. That a man may change from good to bad and from bad to worse is universally admitted, and volumes are filled with scientific reports upon this process of deterioration. To most persons this is all that heredity means; it connotes the transmission of evil traits and tendencies and their downward pull upon the lives by which they are inherited. That easy grade to Avernus has been well surveyed; we know every furlong of it. The popular theology, with its doctrine of total depravity, has accustomed us, in our study of man, to look for evil and only evil, and that continually; we expect to see him sinking deeper and deeper into vice and moral helplessness. And science, in its study of morbid conditions, has put a great deal of emphasis on the same tendencies. "Degeneration," says Professor Harris, "is a stock word of evolution. There is, then, no occasion for surprise, if reversion and degeneration appear in the development of the human species. Their absence would be surprising. There is human as well as plant and animal degeneracy. Max Nordau borrowed the title of

his book from evolution. As plants and animals have diseases which are abnormal, and which impair or destroy the normal type, so there is moral disease which invades and corrupts the ideal character. Whether avoidable or not is a question that pertains to personality. Whether actual or not is a question which does not even arise."[1]

What is the nature of this moral degeneration which all of us have witnessed, which many of us, no doubt, have experienced? Is it an unconscious change? Is the man wholly passive in the process? If you expose the human body to a malarious climate, it becomes gradually tainted by this malarious influence; its organs are impaired, its vigor is reduced, its functions are diseased. But, in all this, the body is unconscious and passive; it suffers this injury without contributing to it; the influence is insidious, but it is an external influence; the physical degeneration is wrought upon the body by a force acting from without. Is it the same with the character? Can that be changed for the worse unconsciously and without a struggle? I do not think so. I am aware that bad moral influences are very insidious, about as subtle as the malaria itself, and that a man who is surrounded with selfishness and impurity and meanness is often very insensibly led along the downward way by the pressure of the environing evil; and yet I do not think that it is quite possible for any man to deteriorate without knowing it, without

[1] *Moral Evolution*, p. 274.

having a hand in it. For every human being has some sort of ideal. That makes him a man. He is not merely a thing, pushed along in his development by forces acting upon him; he is a person; he is a power; and always there is lifted up before him some conception of the man he ought to be. There is no sane human being who does not see such a vision beckoning him, and who does not feel that he ought to follow it. The conception of what manhood means may be very crude and defective, but it is there in his mind, and it lays its authority upon him. He cannot help judging himself by it, while, by this standard, whenever he takes a bad step downward he knows that he is departing from his ideal; he knows that he is unfaithful to the light which he has; he knows that that which is lower is getting the mastery in him over that which is higher. His Dr. Jekyll is losing and his Mr. Hyde is gaining control. With Paul he says, "The good which I would that I do not, but the evil which I would not that I practice." With the old Romans he cries, "Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor." All literature, all language, is full of the records of this struggle of the stalking soul which is wrested by the bad environment and the bad inheritance and driven further and further away from its own ideal. The point to be noted is that it is more or less of a struggle; that there is always some sense of defeat, and of blame and shame on account of it. The man does not blame himself for the evil influences that sur-

round him, and he need not blame himself for any bad heredity, but he does blame himself for not having more sturdily resisted these malign influences. It is not wholly a matter of pressure upon him, and he knows it. His own choices or failures to choose; his own surrenders to the evil when he might have fought, and if worst were, died fighting — these are elements in the process which he cannot hide from himself. He has contributed to his own downfall. He has been unfaithful to his own ideals. Doubtless the ideals have been dimmed and lowered by this very infidelity, so that they do not command him now as once they did, but there is still and always a disparity between what he knows he ought to be and what he is. All this is involved in every instance of the deterioration of character. It is something more than a biological or organic degeneration. It is a spiritual degeneration. There is something behind all these instincts and impulses and appetites and tendencies which judges them all by a standard of its own and says, "I ought; I have sinned; I am to blame." That something is weakened and degraded in this process of moral degeneration.

Degeneration is a fact. Nobody denies it. It is one of the most firmly established facts in the history of the race.

But how about regeneration? Is that an impossibility? Is it true that a man may change from good to bad and from bad to worse, but that he cannot change from bad to good and from good to

better? Is there no such thing as stopping in the downward career, and struggling upward to purer air and better footing? There are many, in these days, who seem to answer this question very positively in the negative. They are inclined to deny that there can be any such change of character as that which is described under the terms conversion and regeneration. Dr. James Freeman Clarke, one of the most eminent of the Unitarian ministers, says: "It is quite common, among Liberal Christians, to doubt the reality or deny the importance of such changes altogether. With them the Christian life consists, not in change, but in progress. In the Christian course, Orthodoxy lays the chief stress on the commencement; Liberal Christianity on the progress. The one wishes you to begin the journey without seeming to care whether you go forward; the other urges you to go forward, without inquiring whether you have begun to go."[1] It ought to be understood that Dr. Clarke thinks both these answers imperfect, but what we are now concerned with is his testimony that there are many of those with whom he is associated who "doubt the reality or deny the importance" of the change known as conversion or regeneration. Such doubts and denials are very common in circles still further removed from the sympathies and activities of the church.

Nor can we wonder that skepticism has arisen respecting the reality of such changes. Those who

[1] *Orthodoxy, Its Truths and Errors*, p. 174.

watch the conduct of the multitudes who are annually reported as having passed through these changes, in connection with the churches, may well indulge this doubt. For it is a melancholy fact that out of the thousands who every winter are counted as converts, the great majority appear to fall back very soon into their old ways. No very clear change in their motives, tempers, purposes, seems to have taken place. The experience appears to have had more to do with their emotions than with their principles of action or their habits of life. And it must be owned that, in the preaching and administration of all the churches, much more emphasis has generally been put upon certain emotional accompaniments of conversion than upon the change of character. In the first twenty-five years of my life I passed through a great many revivals: from my eighth year onward, I was intensely interested in them; I know as well so any human being can know what kinds of processes and effects were emphasized in the preaching and the revival methods of at least three different denominations; and it is the simple truth that the main interest of these meetings was in the emotional effects produced by them. If a man was sorely depressed in his feelings for a season, and if that depression gave way to a feeling of exhilaration or elation, it was deemed a clear case of conversion. The whole machinery of the revival was managed with a view to producing these two states of feeling. The success of the revival largely de-

pended on the power of the revivalist to play upon the feelings of his hearers.

Now I am far from wishing that religion should be divorced from emotion, or from denying that even such methods as these do often result in deep and lasting changes of character; but I say that the tendency of much of what has been known as revivalism has been to exalt the emotional elements of the change unduly, and quite to neglect the proper direction of the intellect, the conscience, and the will; and therefore a large proportion of those swept into the churches on these tides of feeling are like the sand sown in the rocky places which has no deepness of earth to root in, and which, when the sun is up, withers away. Our towns and cities are full of these people. Of the adult Protestants in America, who are now wholly outside of all church influences, I dare say that it would be found, if the facts were known, that a very large majority have been through such an experience as this, in connection with some revival. Many of them are now incorrigible skeptics concerning this change which men call conversion. They will tell you that they have been through it themselves, and they know that there is nothing in it.

All such facts, and it must be owned that there are too many of them, furnish basis for the doubt and denial with which we are dealing. They do undoubtedly justify us in admitting that there is much which goes by the name of conversion and

regeneration which is spurious and unreal. But 14 is not easy to prove a negative of the sort we are considering. One could easily show that ninety-nine hundredths of all the ornaments and objects that look like gold are not gold, — that they are brass or pinchbeck or gilded ware. But that does not prove that there is no such thing as gold; it rather goes to show that there must be such a thing and that it is a very precious thing.

Let us go back to the question. Degeneration, we said, is an undoubted fact. Is it, then, credible that there can be no such thing as regeneration? Is the downward path the only one open to human souls? Is the universe so ordered that a man may freely go toward ruin, but cannot turn from that path and set his face toward the perfection of his manhood? That would be the utterance of the dismalest kind of pessimism. The fact that man can deteriorate is a fact that sometimes calls loud for explanation; but if you should couple with that the belief that improvement is impossible, that there is no turning back from the downward road, the stars would be blotted from the sky. No right-minded man would want to live in such a world as that.

The first reason, then, for believing that it is possible for men to turn from the ways of death to the ways of life is found in our faith that there is a God and that He is good. This is the starting-point of all our thinking, and it is the one truth, as we saw in our first lecture, which rests on the firm-

est foundations. If there is a God who knows and loves us, the ways of life must be open to our feet as well as the ways of death.

The second reason for believing it is that all literatures and all language assume the possibility of such a change in the direction of human conduct. The Bible, which, whatever else may be said about it, is by all reasonable men admitted to be the supreme manual of human conduct, asserts or implies on every page that men may cease to do evil and learn to do well. There is no great epic in the world's literature which does not rest on this assumption. The common speech of men always and everywhere bears witness to it.

The third reason for believing it is that we have seen the thing taking place. We have seen men, under the influence of the highest motives, with the expression of trust in God and prayer to Him, turning from evil courses and beginning lives of faith and virtue. Some of us have the record of scores and hundreds of such cases; we have seen the better life, thus consciously begun, go on without interruption till the day of death.

The fourth reason for believing it is the witness of consciousness. We know that we have the power to choose the better life and to struggle toward it. Even if we are crippled by heredity and borne down by a bad environment, we can turn our faces upstream and swim against the current. The voice that bids us cast away our transgressions and make ourselves a new heart and a

new spirit, to turn ourselves and live, is a voice that speaks with authority. Every man knows when he hears it that he ought to obey it; and because he ought therefore he can. It is not necessary to carry the case beyond the court of conscience. Every one who reads this, and who knows that he is suffering moral degeneration, knows also that he ought to stop in that downward career and go the other way.

The change involves the reënthronement of the ideal. The resolve which expresses it is simply this: "What I ought to be I will be." Instead of weakly surrendering to the baser impulses, the man resolves that the law of his mind, — the ideal, — and not the law in his members, shall rule his life. In effect it is simply a struggle to regain lost manhood and womanhood. Degeneration has been going on; the character has fallen away from the manly or womanly type; the determination is to stop this process of waste and destruction, to recover what has been lost, to rebuild what is falling into decay.

Doubtless, when this becomes a serious purpose, the question will soon arise what manner of man I ought to be. If the ideal has been dimmed by disobedience we desire to have its beauty restored. There is no use in aiming at anything below the best. The ideal must be perfection. We may not reach it, but we must aim at nothing below it. "Be ye therefore perfect," is the only command that is ever heard by the awakened moral nature

turning away from the evil. To accept any lower standard is to stultify conscience and make failure certain. Suppose the draughtsman should say, "I will not try to make this straight line perfectly straight, or this circle perfectly round;" suppose the builder should say, "I will not try to build this wall or this column perfectly perpendicular." Doubtless there will be imperfections in all this work if the workman do his best; but perfection is the only thing he can try for. It is just so with character. The man who knows that he has been sinking below himself feels that there is no salvation for him except as he rises above himself. And no man can lift himself by taking hold of himself. He must take hold of something above him. His own imperfections afford him neither pattern nor inspiration. He must lay hold on the infinite perfection.

Thus it is that it becomes the logical, rational, natural thing for the man who turns from the downward path to turn to God. Any man who believes in God must turn to God when he turns from sin. In the far country, his first sane thought is of his Father's house, and his first right word is, "I will arise and go to my Father." For any man who believes in God, turning from wrong and turning to God are one and the same thing. "For any man who believes in God," I say; but of course I mean any man who believes in the God that you and I have been taught to believe in. There are gods many and lords many: the God of

whom from our childhood we have been taught is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is from Him that we have learned what we know about God; it is the conception that He has given us which arises in our thought whenever we begin to think of that infinite perfection which lays its commands upon us. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your *Father* in heaven is perfect." He is one who loves us all, even the unthankful and the evil; who meets the returning prodigal a long way off; who follows the wanderer into the wilderness and brings him home. It is our belief that the Infinite Perfection is Infinite Compassion which makes it possible to repent and return from our evil ways. And we have been made to believe this by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the scientific, the historical fact, as Professor Harris has told us: "Only one answer can be given to the question how the belief in God's character was created. It came from Jesus: and it came from the life even more than from the words of Jesus. . . . All that came to the surface in expression, words spoken, deeds done, endurance of indignities, bearing of ignominious death,—all welled up out of his consciousness of God the Father living in him, speaking and working through him, shining out in the relation of Fatherhood and Sonship. This is how the belief in God's Fatherhood came to the world. He vitalized it, just by being in the world and living out that life of unbroken union with the Father. Looking abroad we are confused. Look-

ing at him we see God in the character of love. The Fatherhood of God, with all it involves, with the faith and hope it inspires, was given to the belief of men in that personality whose life was rooted in God and whose teaching, service, suffering, and triumph expressed the very character of God. As Jesus is in character so God is. All this has implications concerning the person of Christ which need not now be considered. But Jesus *did* make men believe that God is a good and loving Father, who welcomes them, however bad they may have been, when they return to him with penitence and trust as little children. Jesus is the point of connection between men and God. The divine life flashes through him, becomes visible in his perfect humanity, and thrills into the life of men. With one hand he clasps the hand of man; with the other he clasps the hand of God, and transmits the life of God to man."[1]

Mark you, I am not saying that no man ever found his way to the Father except through Jesus Christ: in every nation devout and penitent souls find Him, and trust in Him; I am only saying that for you and me Jesus Christ has been the revealer, the mediator. Our conceptions of God have come through him. Others, I do not doubt, may have seen the glories of the great Salon Carré in the Louvre by sunlight, or torchlight, or lamplight: I know that I saw them by sunlight, and I doubt if there can be any better light in which to see them.

[1] *Moral Evolution*, p. 514.

And you and I, whether we know it or not, whether we wish it or not, have learned what we know about God through Jesus Christ. It is through Him that we have been made to believe in His divine compassion, and are filled with the hopes of divine help and succor when we turn from our evil ways.

I have used the two words, conversion and regeneration, interchangeably, as if they meant the same thing. I have done so because in our experience there is no possibility of distinguishing them. Conversion, if we must make a distinction, signifies that part of the change which has to do with our own conscious purposes and choices. Regeneration describes the divine influences which act upon us, softening our hearts, awakening our consciences, arousing our nobler feelings. When the Prodigal sat there musing in the fields, and the thought of his home and his father was borne into his heart, and he saw how wilful and foolish he had been, the work of regeneration was going on within him; and when he said, "I will arise and go unto my father," that was conversion.

Which of these is first in the order of grace? I suppose that regeneration must be, because God is first in everything; He is the Author of all life; it is in Him that we live and move and have our being. But in the order of experience there is neither first nor last. No man is regenerated till his own will has responded to the divine influence; no man can be converted without the aid of the divine spirit any more than he can see without

light or breathe without air. Which is the first condition of fire, fuel or flame? It is difficult to see how there can be fire without something to burn, or how the fuel can burn until the flame or the spark is brought to it. Each is conditional for the other.

But the action of this divine Spirit, which reaches our souls, which gently leads us back from our wanderings into the ways of life, is silent and subtle and manifold in its workings. It is the Spirit of life; and life has just as many ways of coming to light, just as many types and forms and manifestations in the spiritual world, as in the physical world. Some people think that the process of conversion is a stereotyped routine; that there is a mill to go through, and that everybody must go in at the hopper and come out at the shoot; that unless you have had the regulation experience your conversion is not genuine. There are many to whom it is incredible that any man should begin to live a new life without going through a course at the mourners' bench. Yet Jesus says that the influence of the Spirit upon the human soul is like the summer wind, which "blows eth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth,"— subtle, mysterious, unobserved in its silent approaches. By a thousand different avenues it finds its way into our lives. Something makes us serious and thoughtful; the shadow of a divine discontent falls gently upon the landscape of our thought; the unworth-

ness of our aims, the poverty of our gains begin to trouble us; visions of a larger and nobler life pass before us, beckoning and calling. Such thoughts may come as we muse alone at the eventide, looking away to the fading light in the western sky and to the steadfast stars above us. They may come to us as we walk the crowded streets and scan the eager faces, and think how many are seeking the good of life and how few there be that find it. They may come to us in some moment of defeat, when we are suddenly made aware of powers wasted and ambitions gone astray. They may come to us — these heavenly visitants — in the hour of bereavement: —

> "With silence only as their benediction,
> God's angels come,
> Where in the shadow of a deep affliction
> The soul sits dumb."

But most often, I think, the new desires for better life are kindled in us by the touch upon our lives of some mature purer and better than our own, which reproves us, and charms us, and inspires us with new hope. The divine Spirit may reveal the Christ to us in many ways, but most of us have seen him first in some good man or woman. The life is the light of men — always was, and ever shall be. There is regenerating power in holy human lives. This is the way God means to convey his grace, by living epistles, from parent to child, from teacher to pupil, from lover to lover, from friend to friend. There is a subtle energy in high

spiritual character, the effluence of which is deeply felt by all who come within its sphere. The great poets have all felt this, none more deeply than Browning. His poetry says everywhere, Professor Corson tells us, "that through conversion, through wheeling into a new centre its spiritual system, the soul attains to saving truth." Perhaps the most striking instance of this in Browning's poetry is shown us in the character of Caponsacchi, in "The Ring and the Book." This gay young priest, with none too keen a conscience, and with all his thoughts of life and conduct perverted by the low standards of his brother ecclesiastics, is brought into close touch with Pompilia, the whitest, purest, womanliest soul in all fiction, and the regenerating effect of her life upon his is one of the most beautiful incidents in literature. The story, as Caponsacchi himself tells it, "admits us," as Corson says, "to the very heart of Browning's poetry, — admits us to the great Idea. . . . which no other poet . . . has brought out with the same degree of distinctness, — the great Idea which may be variously characterised as that of soul-kindling, soul-quickening, adjustment of soul-attitude, regeneration, conversion, through *personality*."[1] Pompilia had laid her commands on this stranger, calling him as a true knight of God to deliver her; she had greatly trusted and honored him; the subtle energy of her pure soul had struck through and transfigured his, and he passed from her presence into

[1] *Introduction to Browning's Poetry*, p. 66.

newness of life. Thus he tells the judges what happened: —

"'Thought?' say, Sire, what shall follow was not thought;
I have thought sometimes, and thought long and hard.
I have stood before, gone round a serious thing,
Tasked my whole mind to touch and clasp it close,
As I stretch forth my arm to touch this sun,
God and man, and what duty I owe both, —
I dare to say I have confronted these
In thought: but no such faculty helped here.
I put forth no thought, — powerless, all that night
I paced the city: it was the first Spring:
By the invasion I lay passive to,
In ranked new things, the old were rept away;
Allin abolished — the imprisonment
Of the outside air, the inside weight o' the world
That pulled me down. Death meant, to spurn the ground,
Soar to the sky, — die well and you do that.

* * *

"Sire, I obeyed. Obedience was too strange, —
This new thing that had been struck into me
By the look o' the lady, — to dare disobey.
The first authoritative word. 'T was God's.
I had been lifted to the level of her,
Could take such sounds into my scope. I said:
'We too are cognizant o' the Master now;
She it is bids me bow the head; how true,
I am a prism! I see the function here;
I thought the other way self-sacrifice:
This is the true, seals up the perfect sum.
I pay it, sit down, silently obey.'"

From this hour the man is changed; he makes you see and feel that old things had passed away; that all things had become new; the work had been wrought in him by the transforming power of a high and pure personality.

Browning is not, you see, afraid of spiritual crises. He believes in them. He thinks that no better thing can happen to a man than to be roused, startled, shaken out of himself by some great experience. So he sings:—

> "Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
> But not quite so sunk that moments,
> Sure though seldom, are denied us,
> When the spirit's fine endowments
> Stand out plainly from its false ones,
> And operate in due pursuing
> Or the right way or the wrong way,
> To its triumph or undoing.
>
> "There are flashes struck from midnights,
> There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
> Whereby gild-up honors perish,
> Whereby sunless ambitions dwindle,
> While just this or that poor impulse,
> Which for once had play unstifled,
> Seems the sole work of a lifetime,
> That away the rest have trifled."[1]

It is in these critical hours of our experience that new conceptions of the meaning of life come to us, and we are renewed in the spirit of our minds.

Such is the verdict of a great master of the lore of the spirit. "With Mr. Browning," says Edward Dowden, "the moments are most glorious . . . in which a resolution that changes the current of life has been taken in reliance upon that insight which vivid emotion bestows; and those periods of our history are charged most fully with moral purpose

[1] *Cristina.*

which take their direction from moments such as these."

If these things are so, it is not only true that there is such a thing as conversion, but it is probable that it is a much more common thing, a much more homely and reasonable thing, than we have sometimes supposed. It is not only in the sanctuary and before the altar that this great experience comes to us. It may come even to the infant, lying on its mother's breast, and looking into her face. By the mother's holy love, the child's soul may be transfigured, its tendencies to selfishness and animalism checked, its better impulses reinforced. More is done, Dr. Bushnell says, "to fix the moral and religious character of children before the age of language than after." The shrine at which most true conversions occur is the mother's knee. But there are numberless other experiences in which the same transforming influence falls upon the life, and changes the current of its thoughts and purposes, arresting the processes of moral decay, and turning the soul toward the firm choice of its own ideal. I am fain to believe that a great many men and women, whose names are not written on the rolls of the churches, have known the substance of this change which we call conversion, and are following the leadings of God's spirit toward the goal of perfect manhood and womanhood.

Yet I am equally convinced that there are many men and women who have not as yet passed

through it, and to whom it is the one thing needful. Some of them are members of the church and some are not. But the one thing that seems clear concerning them is that degeneration is the word that best describes them. They are becoming less truthful, less honorable, less pure, less kind, more reckless, more self-indulgent, more absorbed in things of the earth. They are going in this downward road against the protest of their own better natures, against the strivings of the Spirit of God. What they need is conversion. Culture will never do; they must stop short in the road they are traveling and go the other way. They must reenthrone the ideal to which they have so long been disobedient. They must highly resolve that henceforth the law of the mind, and not the law of the members, shall bear rule in their lives, that by God's grace they will become the men and women that they ought to be. They went down by surrendering; they must go up by fighting. They must call on Him who has kindled this desire in their hearts to help them in realizing it. And they must put themselves into an environment that will feed and stimulate the better elements of their lives instead of the baser ones. For all who will do this there is life and hope and the promise of victory.

XII

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

"WHAT is the use of the sacraments?" is the question now before us.

A sacrament — *sacramentum* — in the Roman usage sometimes signified the oath taken by soldiers at the time of their first enlistment, and sometimes a sum of money deposited as security with a court by a suitor in entering upon litigation. The unsuccessful litigant forfeited this deposit to "sacred uses." This was the word which, in the Western Church, was applied to certain ceremonials of religion. It is not easy to connect the Latin word with the Christian rite; perhaps the notion of a vow or pledge was in the minds of those who first spoke of these ceremonies as sacraments. The word is not in the New Testament; I am not sure at what date the Christians first began to use it.

In the Greek provinces this word was not used. "*Mysterion*" was the name which the Greek Fathers applied to these solemnities. That word denoted any secret which had been revealed, and especially the secret religious ceremonies practiced in the worship of the gods of Greece. Thus, in the earlier days, the Greek Christians described as

mysteries what the Latins then knew, and we now know, as the sacraments.

In the early church it would appear that but two of these rites possessed a sacramental character: as the ecclesiasticism developed itself, others were added until no less than seven sacraments were recognized,—baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony. The Reformation reduced the number of sacraments to the original two observed by the apostolic churches, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The twenty-fifth of the English Articles of Religion says: "There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted as sacraments of the gospel, being such as have grown partly out of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not like nature of sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God." This is a fair statement of the attitude of the Reformed Churches toward this question of the number of sacraments. We are speaking for the Reformed Churches, and are considering therefore only those which they recognize.

The origin of baptism, to which at the present time we shall confine our study, is not altogether

clear. That it was adopted from the first as the initial rite, by which men were received into the Christian society, is not doubted. This initiation was accompanied by the application of water, in some way, to the person. But this ceremony was not invented for the Christian community. It was borrowed or adopted from something that had previously existed. This is almost the universal fact. The forms of ecclesiastical usage, the forms of ritual, are rarely manufactured out of whole cloth; like political and social usages and forms they are generally taken over from previous systems and altered somewhat to suit present needs. These ceremonial usages are largely the product of evolutionary forces, growths whose beginnings we can find in the earliest ages and often connected with crude ideas and barbarous lives.

"Curious minds," says Professor Allen, "may seek to antedate the origin of these venerable rites, carrying it back into pre-Christian ages, even to savage customs before the beginning of history. But we must learn to outgrow the fallacy that the origin of a custom neutralizes its validity; for certainly no cruder, grosser origin could be demonstrated than is now set forth by the scientific principle of evolution for the origin and descent of man. If Jews or heathens can be shown to have anticipated such rites as those it only confirms their significance. We have got beyond the old apologetic which sought to prove that Christianity in its doctrines or ethics or practice was something

entirely new to the world. Its coincidences with older religions or older ethical systems are so many fresh illustrations of its truth."[1]

The immediate historical connection of Christian baptism is with the baptism of John the forerunner. John's baptism was primarily a baptism of repentance; it signified the putting away of the old sins, and the cleansing of the life; but it must have meant more than this, or Jesus would not have submitted to it. It must have possessed a social as well as an individual significance. I think that it denoted the formation of a new society to which by this simple ceremonial men were admitted. Probably the meaning of it was that the whole people had become so defiled and perverted in thought and life that a new Israel, a spiritual Israel, must be called forth and consecrated, and this was the form of admission into the new society, the kingdom of heaven. The baptism of Jesus was his initiation into this new society, of which he was indeed the head, but of which he would also be a member, identified with his brethren, and not separate from them. So that Christian baptism is thus really a continuation of John's baptism, a development out of it, carrying over the same central idea and adding to it other and higher conceptions.

We are expressly told that our Lord himself never baptized. His disciples were attached to him by no ceremonies or formalities whatever. Yet

[1] *Christian Institutions*, p. 400.

when, in Jerusalem, on and after Pentecost, adherents were added to the Christian community, baptism was administered to them. That was the ceremony by which they signified their intention of being known as his followers. The apostles proclaimed this as requisite for enrollment in the new community.

This initiatory rite involved two ideas: (1) The candidates were baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ." This implied a confession of faith in him as the Messiah and a vow of loyalty to him. His name was named upon them; they owned that they were his sons; they were his favors they wished to be counted among his followers. Baptism was the sacramental oath of their enlistment in his service. (2) They were also baptized "for the remission of sins." This was quite in keeping with all the Jewish ideas connected with the rites of purification. Such a symbolical cleansing from past offenses was part of their own ritual. Doubtless the one great sin from which baptism on the day of Pentecost signified the absolution was the sin of putting to death the Messiah. But doubtless, also, they understood that with this sin they must seek to be cleansed from all their other transgressions, — to turn over a new leaf, and begin life afresh. This is that appeal of a good conscience, which Peter says that baptism is; the application to the body of pure water signified the desire to be "cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit," and the faith that those who thus iden-

tified themselves in heart and life with Jesus Christ would obtain from him the inspiration and help by which they should gain this inward purity.

Several interesting facts come to light as we study the customs of the early Christians in the light of all the new learning. The exploration of documents and monuments has made some things plain which were formerly in doubt. There seems to be little question that the Christians of the earliest times usually baptized by immersion. There was no hard and fast rule about it, but that mode was preferred. The reference to the ordinance in the earliest writers bear this interpretation. One of the best and most authoritative sources is that little book entitled "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which was discovered and published only a few years ago. This book was written as early as the middle of the second century, not more than fifty years after the death of the Apostle John, and it gives a clear account of the observances of the Christians of that time, in the form of specific directions to the churches and their ministers. Its words about baptism are as follows:—

"Now concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: having first uttered all these things [having repeated the rules of conduct by which Christians must govern their lives] baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water. But if thou hast not running water, baptize in other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither,

pour water upon the head thrice, into the name of Father and Son and Spirit."

This makes it clear that the preference of these early Christians was for baptism by immersion in a river; the use of a baptistery or tank would not have seemed good to them, though it would have been allowed if no stream were accessible; and so would the method of affusion when that was more convenient. The decisive fact is that *the mode was not imperative;* any reverent application of water to the body answered the requirements of these sensible believers. Naturally, as men's conceptions became broader and more spiritual, less and less emphasis would be placed on that which was merely outward. The question of the mode became more and more a question of indifference. The further general adoption of affusion resulted from putting less emphasis on the external form.

It is also probable that the baptism of infants was unknown in the days of the apostles. The supposed references to infant baptism in the New Testament are dubious, and the arguments which seek to show that it must have taken the place of the Jewish rite of circumcision are far from conclusive. There is not a hint of it in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." "It is possible," says Professor Allen, "that infant baptism was practiced to some extent from the first, or even that it was administered by the apostles. But there is no demonstrative evidence on this point to

which we can appeal. That the prevailing custom in the early church was adult baptism is admitted. Evidence that a change was taking place is abundant in the third century.[1] "Even among Christian households," says Dean Stanley, "the instances of Chrysostom, Gregory, Nazianzen, Basil, Ephrem of Edessa, Augustine, Ambrose, are decisive proofs that [the baptism of infants] was not only not obligatory, but not usual. All these distinguished personages had Christian parents, and yet were not baptized until they reached maturity."[2]

By many persons this admission will be regarded as decisive evidence that the practice of infant baptism is not warranted in the modern church. But this is not clear. We are doing a great many things to-day that those Christians of the first centuries never dreamed of doing: we ought to have a much larger conception of the meaning of Christianity than they ever had. Perhaps the admission of children to baptism may be due to a higher and truer view of the Christian society than was vouchsafed to them.

We must not, however, deny that some superstitious and unworthy reasons were mingled with the higher and nobler ones in bringing about this change. In truth the little children have had a great deal to do, in one way and another, with the development of our theology and our ethics; our

[1] *Christian Institutions*, p. 606.
[2] *Christian Institutions*, p. 34.

relation to them has brought out some of the worst as well as some of the best traits of human nature, and some of the darkest as well as some of the brightest phases of speculative thought.

During these early Christian centuries infanticide was fearfully prevalent throughout the Roman empire, and it is at least possible that the belief in the damnation of infants was strengthened by a Christian instinct which strove to suppress this horrible crime. The Christian who reproved his heathen neighbor for putting his little child to death would naturally magnify the injury to the child by emphasizing the misery to which it was consigned after death. And this deepening sense of possible peril to the little children may well have led to the practice of infant baptism. Doubtless, too, the gradual growth of the belief in the saving efficacy of baptism had much to do with the introduction of the baptism of infants. Augustine it was who, by his tremendous logic, forced both these beliefs upon the church. That infants were doomed to eternal death for Adam's sin and that baptism is indispensable to salvation were ideas with which he darkened the mind of the Christian church for a thousand years and more. Under the spell of this horrible doctrine parents hastened to present their children at the font. This was not indeed any guarantee of their salvation; for Augustine's dreadful decree of predestination still hung its black shadow over them. No infant could be saved who was not baptised; but it was

far from being true that all baptized infants were saved. God's electing grace never went outside the visible church to save any one, infant or adult; his range of choice was strictly limited to those inside the church; all outside were reprobate, whether or no; among the baptized, he exercised his sovereign prerogative, and saved such of them as He was pleased to save. Children might not be saved if they were baptized, but could not be unless they were baptized. It was the prevalence of this belief that made infant baptism universal in the church after the middle of the fifth century.

Augustine's doctrine of predestination was considerably modified by the Catholic theologians in later years; but his doctrine that baptism is indispensable to salvation has held its ground in the Roman Catholic Church to this day. It is not now believed by good Catholics that unbaptized infants dying in infancy are tormented in hell fire; they are consigned to an abode of comparative comfort; but they are forever excluded from the presence of God. And the belief of the extreme High Church party in the Anglican Church is, I believe, substantially the same.

All this is very melancholy. To believe that the Father in heaven can permit the little ones who are taken out of this world before they come to years of discretion to be forever exiled from his presence because of the neglect or the ignorance of their parents, — because no consecrating drops of water have fallen upon their foreheads, — is to take

a strange view of his character. And so far as the prevalence of a belief like this has tended to bring about the change from the adult baptism of the apostolic days to the infant baptism of later days, we may deplore the means, whatever we may say of the end.

It is, however, true that God often makes the wrath of man to praise Him; and the modern practice may be a good one, even though the paths which have led to it are dark and tortuous. Most of those who in these days present their children at the font for baptism do so, not because they have any fear that the omission of the rite will consign their children to perdition, but for other and far worthier reasons. And I suppose that even while the black spectre of infant damnation was filling the minds of believers with terror, there was growing in the church a larger conception of the relation of men to one another and to God, which made way for the admission of the children to the rights and privileges of the Christian church.

"Adult baptism," says Professor Allen, "stood for the principle of individualism, demanding intelligence as the condition of repentance and faith and the personal vow of obedience as the ground of its proper administration. But the social aim of the church, looking to the welfare of all, taking men in their collective capacity as a whole, the need for an institution representing *the solidarity of the Christian world in its common hopes and fears* — this necessity influenced the transition from

adult to infant baptism. The principle of individualism, the characteristic of the church of the first three centuries, was passing into desuetude. The church had a work to do for the people which they could not do for themselves. The obligation of humanity to the church became universal. It was to become no longer a question of 'joining the church,' as the expression goes; the union of individuals no longer created the church. The world of man was henceforth to be created within the church; infants from their birth were to be received into its fold. The transition at least bore witness to the faith that all men were capable of receiving a divine nurture, and that education is the divine method of evoking the image of God in man.[1]

It is this idea of the solidarity of the generations which finds expression in the ordinance of infant baptism. It is the idea that *families* ought to be Christian, and not individuals merely: that there is an organic social bond which Christianity should recognize and sanctify. It is the idea that the Christian community is one in which the whole household should be included; that it is not a society which takes in parents and leaves out their little children.

In the Society of Friends every one born of parents belonging to the Society is a birthright member. That is the idea which lies at the foundation of infant baptism, though it has not been so frankly

[1] *Christian Institutions*, p. 407.

avowed as it ought to have been. Is it not true that the children of Christian parents should have a birthright membership in the Christian community, — in the kingdom of heaven? Are they not heirs of the kingdom? And should not the fact of their inheritance be solemnly recognized and declared?

The state recognizes and affirms the fact that our children are organically connected with it. That parents should be members of the commonwealth while their children are aliens would be an intolerable conception. The children are not called on to perform all the duties of citizenship until they have attained to a certain age; but the rights and privileges of citizenship are theirs from the moment of their birth. The youngest infant of either sex in this city is just as much a citizen of Ohio and of the United States as is Governor Bushnell or President McKinley. The state is thus, in every theory of her constitution, in the whole practice of her administration, the mother of all the children born within her jurisdiction. Shall the church be less motherly than the state?

This, I say, is the real belief which underlies the modern practice of infant baptism. It is the belief that the constitution of the Christian commonwealth ought to be such that children should be recognized as forming a part of it. For I do not think that there is any intelligible theory of infant baptism which does not recognize the baptized children as members of the Christian Society,

just as truly members as the children are citizens of the commonwealth; not yet fully entered into all the obligations of membership, but fully entitled to all the privileges of membership. It is well that they should be called upon, when they are old enough to understand what it means, to come forward and assume for themselves these obligations; but let them feel from their earliest childhood that they are not outside the fellowship of the church, but within its sheltering arms and under its nurturing care.

Three theories of infant baptism are now held and taught: —

The first is that of the Roman Catholics and High Anglicans, that baptism regenerates the soul; that in the rite of baptism a spiritual change is wrought, by which original sin is purged away, and a Christian character is imparted. I will not dwell on this theory, for it is not likely that any of us are inclined to believe it.

The second is the theory of the Reformed Churches generally that infant baptism is the seal of a covenant made by God with believers only: a promise that He will be their God and their children's God. In baptism, it is supposed, believers ratify that covenant and claim that promise, and the children of the covenant are thus placed in a more favorable condition and may expect a greater measure of God's favor than other children not thus consecrated. The ordinance, that is to say, while it does not secure their regeneration, does

make some change in the relation which they sustain to God.

I cannot bring myself to the acceptance of this theory. I cannot believe that God cares any more for the baptized children than for the unbaptized, nor that this act of its parents and the church changes in any way his fatherly relation to any little child.

The third theory assumes that the fact of the divine Fatherhood is a universal fact; that every child who is born into this world is God's child when he is born. This is the fact which Jesus came to reveal,—the one fundamental truth of the Christian religion. All that any man needs to do in order to secure his own salvation and to fulfil his destiny is to accept that fact and order his conduct to it. To be filial and obedient children of our Father in heaven is to fulfill all righteousness. Now the rite of baptism simply declares this fact of the Fatherhood of God, and solemnly bears witness that this child is his child; putting upon him the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; publicly numbering him as one of that great family which comprehends every fatherhood on earth and in heaven. The rite does not make this child God's child; it simply recognizes and declares the fact. It does not change God's relation to the child in any wise; it only joyfully confesses the relation which we believe to exist between God and this child. I do not know that I can more clearly present the true signifi-

cance of infant baptism, according to this view, than by quoting the words which are spoken to parents when they bring their children to my own church to be baptized :—

"In presenting these children for baptism you confess your faith in the universal Fatherhood of Him who said, 'All souls are mine,' and in the tender care and the redeeming love of Him who said, 'Of such is the Kingdom of heaven.' You bring them to Him that they may be baptized into His name, and declared to be His children. You promise to teach them, among the earliest lessons of their lives, that they are His children : that they owe to Him the love of their hearts and the service of their lives ; that the beginning of wisdom is to trust Him and fear Him. And you solemnly covenant with Him to-day, that not only by the teaching of your lips, but by the holy influence of consecrated lives you will seek to reveal to them the mighty power which is able to save us from our sins, to comfort us in our sorrows, and to bring us home to God. Do you thus promise ?"

Thus the rite is intended to express and declare the universal Fatherhood of God ; the child's relation to Him is the fact which it emphasizes. It does not create this fact ; it simply confesses and declares it. The child's relation to God is not changed by baptism ; but the parents and the church unite to acknowledge this relation, and promise to teach the child to accept it for himself. The salvation of the child is not assured by it ; for

though he is one of God's children, he may be disobedient and rebellious. The responsibility of the parent to bring him up in the fear and love of God is not created by this rite, for it existed before; but it is confessed by the parent, and witnessed by the church. And the church, in whose name this is done, does thus assume for itself a responsibility for the child whose name is thus written upon her roll, to surround him with good influences and seek to guide his feet into the way of life.

Thus, to my mind, the rite of infant baptism is the single and sublime testimony to the most momentous fact which the human mind can entertain, that every human being is a child of the eternal Father, made to love Him, and know Him, and trust in Him, and live in communion with Him. Nameless these children of ours inherit from us and from those who have gone before us many infirmities and evil tendencies; doubtless there are evil dispositions in them that will require the regenerating grace of God; but after all the one thing that makes them precious is their inheritance of the divine nature; they are God's children in a deeper sense even than they are our children: his image is stamped on them, and they are made to grow up in his love and in his likeness. If this is true it is the one truth which means more than every other; the one truth which we ought to keep before our own minds and before the minds of our children in all our training of them; and the rite which expresses this great truth respecting the divine par-

entage of our children and the destiny to which God's love is calling them is one which, I think, ought to appeal to the heart of every Christian parent.

"In each such little child," says Dean Stanley, "our Saviour saw, and we may see, the promise of a glorious future. In those little hands folded in unconscious repose, in those bright eyes first awakening to the outer world, in that soft forehead unfurrowed by the ruffle of care or sin, He saw, and we may see, the undeveloped rudimental instruments of the labor and intelligence and energy of a whole life. And not only so, — not only in hope, but in actual reality, does the blessing on little children, whether as expressed in the gospel story or as implied in infant baptism, acknowledge the excellency and value of the childlike soul. Not once only in his life, but again and again he held them up to his disciples as the best corrective of the ambitions and passions of mankind."[1]

If such is the significance of baptism when administered to an infant, what does it signify when administered to an adult? Fundamentally the same thing. What the child's parents declare respecting their child, the man declares for himself. He has come to recognize the solemn and momentous fact that he is God's child, and he wishes to confess that fact and enroll himself as a member of the household of faith. I do not know that anything is involved in adult baptism which is not

[1] *Christian Institutions*, p. 21.

expressed when you say that the man baptized acknowledges and seeks to realize his filial relation to his Father in heaven. Doubtless this must imply penitence for past unfilial conduct, trust in the divine forgiveness, and the wish and purpose to seek the divine inspiration and help in living a better life. And doubtless also in confessing the universal Fatherhood, he must acknowledge the human brotherhood, and seek to put himself into brotherly relations with all men. It is all summed up when we say that the man who intelligently seeks Christian baptism simply expresses by that rite his acceptance of the truth of the divine Fatherhood and the human brotherhood as revealed to the world by Jesus Christ, and his wish and purpose to follow Jesus Christ in conforming his life to the great truths thus revealed.

But what is the use of the baptism? What value has the mere act of sprinkling water upon the forehead, with the pronunciation of a certain form of words?

Of course this external rite possesses no inherent efficacy. It is purely symbolic. But symbols have their uses. Some of us care but little for them; to others they signify much. There is a ring on somebody's finger that is not worth very much as an article of merchandise, but that no money would buy because of what it symbolizes. There are faded flowers somewhere that you would not willingly part with; they tell you something that you like to hear. There are buttons, badges, that

some of us wear — slight things, but very significant. There is that flag flying from the dome over yonder. What is it? A piece of weather-beaten bunting? It is a symbol, — the symbol of our nationality. Is it not a silly thing, a childish thing, for a great nation to have such a symbol? Would we not all be just as loyal, just as patriotic, without it? No. That flag has a great deal to do in educating, deepening, intensifying, the national feeling of the American people. Human beings are so made that their thought is awakened, their imagination kindled, their affections called forth by the use of symbols. The Founder of our faith knew men; He knew that a simple symbolic rite, like baptism, would be of great service in gathering his followers and building his kingdom. It has been of immense value in all the past, and it will be in all the future. It is destined to mean a great deal more in the future than it has ever meant in the past. When all the superstitious and mechanistic notions that have fastened upon it shall be stripped away; when it is no longer associated in men's minds with anything like magic; when it is understood simply as the symbol of membership in that great household of faith and love of which the Father in heaven is the Head and Jesus Christ is the Elder Brother, the number of those who claim it for themselves and for their children will increase and multiply, until the glad confession of the universal Fatherhood shall bring to the world the thousand years of peace.

XIII

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE history of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is well worth studying. It would be interesting, if it were possible to go into it carefully, to present in picturesque detail the changes which have taken place in the theory and in the administration of this rite from the earliest ages to the latest times and throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. That would make a lively story. The notions entertained have been so manifold and curious, the usages followed so quaint and various, that the narrative would afford a great deal of diversion and not a little instruction. One is hardly prepared to estimate rightly the forms and institutions of our common Christianity until he has traced their development through all its historical stages. It is, however, but a few glimpses that we shall get of this remarkable evolution; those who desire a graphic account of it will find it in Dean Stanley's volume entitled "Christian Institutions."

We have the story of the first celebration of the Supper in each of the first three Gospels; the narrative in John tells us of a last Supper of our Lord with the twelve, but gives no hint of any emblem-

atic or sacramental character. In Mark's Gospel we read that the Master and his disciples partook of the passover feast together in an upper chamber in Jerusalem ; "and as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed he brake it and gave to them, and said, Take ye ; this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave to them, and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many." Matthew adds to this last phrase the words "unto remission of sins." Luke adds the injunction, "This do in remembrance of me." It is a little strange that Matthew and Mark both omit this memorial feature. Neither of the first two Gospels gives us any hint of any future observance of the Supper. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul, in a more elaborate account of the first Supper, represents the Lord as thrice repeating the idea that the supper was to be eaten in remembrance of him, "to show forth the Lord's death until he come." Undoubtedly Luke, who was a traveling companion of Paul, reflects in his Gospel Paul's understanding of the ordinance.

As to the manner of its first observance we have ample sources of information. Stanley's description brings the scene clearly before us :—

"It was the evening feast, of which every Jewish household partook on the night, as it might be, before or after the Passover. They were collected together, the Master and his twelve disciples, in

one of the large upper rooms above the open court of the inn or caravanserai to which they had been guided. The couches or mats were spread round the room, as in all Eastern houses; and on these the guests lay reclined, three on each couch, according to the custom derived from the universal usage of the Greek or Roman world. The ancient Jewish usage of eating the Passover standing had given way, and a symbolical meaning was given to what was in fact a more social fashion, that they might lie there like kings, with the ease becoming free men.

"There they lay, the Lord in the midst, next to him the beloved disciple, and next to him the eldest, Peter. Of the position of the others we know nothing. There was placed on the table, in front of the guests, one, two, perhaps four cups or rather bowls. There is at Genoa a bowl which professes to be the original chalice,—a mere fancy, no doubt,—but probably representing the original shape. This bowl was filled with wine mixed up with water. The wine of old times was always mixed with water. . . . Beside the cup was one or more of the large thin Passover cakes of unleavened bread, such as may still, at the Paschal season, be seen in all Jewish houses. It is this of which the outward form has been preserved in the thin round wafer which is used in the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches. It was the recollection of the unleavened bread of the Israelites when they left Egypt. As the wine was mixed with water, so the bread

was probably served up with fish. The two always went together. We see examples of it in the earlier meals in the Gospel, and so doubtless it was in this last. Close beside this cake was another recollection of the Passover, — a thick sop, which was supposed to be like the Egyptian clay and in which the fragments of the Paschal cake were dipped. Round the table, leaning on each other's breasts, reclining on those couches, were the twelve disciples and their Master. From mouth to mouth passed to and fro the eager inquiry and the startled look when they heard that one of them should betray him. Across the table and from side to side were shot the earnest questions from Peter, from Jude, from Thomas, from Philip. In each face might have been traced the character of each receiving a different impression from what he saw and heard — and in the midst of all this the majestic, sorrowful countenance of the Master of the Feast as he drew toward him the several cups and the thin transparent cake, and pronounced over each the Jewish blessing with those few words which have become immortal.[1]

Such was the scene in the upper chamber. It was the same night in which he was betrayed — the last night of his life on the earth. Is it any wonder that the incidents of this Supper made a deep impression upon his disciples? Even if he had laid no commands on them, it would have been very natural for them to commemorate in some

[1] *Christian Institutions*, pp. 35, 36.

way an event so full of tender significance. And it seems clear that some such commemoration was observed by them very soon after his death. The character of this observance was not, however, at the beginning anything like what we now know as the Sacrament of the Eucharist. It began in an institution known as the *Agape* or Love-Feast. The disciples were wont, in the earliest days, to come together, as many of them as could every evening, for their ordinary evening meal. Very strong was the feeling among them that they were one family; they made that fact manifest in all their social relations. That there was a thoroughly organized communism may be doubted, but the spirit was there that made all things common. When there were too many of them to meet in one assembly they came together evening after evening in little groups, — neighborhood socialites, we might almost call them, — and had their supper together. Always at these suppers the broken bread and the common cup commemorated the crucified and risen Lord. Every such social supper was a Lord's Supper. The distinction between the sacred and the secular was obliterated. There was no special sacramental service, such as we now celebrate.

Paul gives us, in his first letter to the Corinthians, the reason why the service which we now regard as sacramental was separated from the social feast. Abuses had crept into this common observance. The disciples were hardly spiritual enough to keep this celebration up to the high-water mark

at which it originated. They began to use it as an occasion of feasting; and instead of emphasizing the common life of the brotherhood, it gave opportunity for selfish greediness and coarse disregard for the feelings and the rights of others. Those who came early ate up all the provision, even gorging themselves, so that those who came late had nothing left. This state of things Paul sharply reproves. "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together," he says, "it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper; for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God and put to shame them that have not? What shall I say unto you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. . . . Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another. If any man is hungry, let him eat at home, that your coming together be not unto judgment."[1]

There soon reasons the sacramental and the social gatherings gradually fell apart, and while the love-feasts were maintained for several centuries — in some portions of the church longer than in other portions — the Lord's Supper was finally separated from them, and became a strictly religious ceremony, gradually taking upon itself a character quite different from that which was given to it in the apostolic days. Some of these changes will be indicated in the briefest manner.

[1] Cor. xi.

The posture of the disciples at the first supper was, as we have seen, a reclining posture. Nowhere in the world is this form now observed. In some churches the communicants receive the sacrament standing, in some sitting, in some kneeling; while the Pope, for his part, because of a long dispute as to what his attitude should be, has apparently adopted one which is slightly ambiguous, and leans upon his chair in such a way as to make it difficult for onlookers to determine whether he is sitting or standing. If form or mode is an essential element of a sacrament, I see not why the form or mode is not as important in the one sacrament as in the other; and if the example of our Lord and his apostles is to be strictly followed, nobody in the world is properly observing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I presume that we shall admit that the posture is not a vital matter; that the sacrament may be just as profitably administered in another mode than that followed by our Lord and the twelve, — to those who are standing, or kneeling, or sitting, as religiously as to those who are lying down.

The time of the observance has also been changed, nearly or quite universally. It was originally, as we have seen, coupled with the evening meal; and the name of the Supper still clings to it in our usage — still more closely in the German name of Abendmahl. In the second century, however, for various prudential reasons it was changed to an early morning hour; and now

throughout the world this is the ordinary observance. Some of those who make most of it put great emphasis on the necessity of early communion, and think that it is not properly administered at any other time of the day.

The form of the bread in the ancient church was that of flat circular cakes, such as we may see in Jewish homes about Easter time. Some of the churches, sticking for small things, have tried to preserve this form. But "it is evident," as Dean Stanley says, "that the Roman and Lutheran churches, by adhering to the literal form of the old institution, have lost its meaning: and the Reformed churches, whilst certainly departing from the original form, have preserved the meaning. The bread of common life, which was in the first two centuries represented by the thin unleavened cake, is now represented by the ordinary loaf." [1]

Both bread and wine were originally given to all the communicants. For certain reasons the cup was withheld from the laity, during the Middle Ages, and the dispute over this question between Catholics and Reformers resulted in bloody wars. In this quarrel neither side can be wholly justified. The withholding of the cup from the laity was the result of a fear lest the consecrated wine, which had been transformed into the blood of the Redeemer, might be spilled on the ground. That seems to us a superstitious fear. But the Catholic doctrine was that the real presence of the Saviour

[1] *Christian Institutions*, p. 50.

was in either of the consecrated elements; and that a communicant who had partaken of one of them had received all the grace that the sacrament could impart. This was, in effect, saying that the efficacy of the sacrament was not dependent on the material elements, which was, in one sense, a broader and more spiritual view than that of the Reformers. "When the Bohemian Utraquists," says Dean Stanley, "fought with desperate energy to recover the use of the cup, they were in one sense doubtless fighting the cause of the laity against the clergy, of old Catholic latitude against modern Roman restrictions. But with that obliquity of purpose which sometimes characterizes the fiercest ecclesiastical struggles, the Roman Church, on the other hand, was fighting the battle of an enlarged and liberal view of the sacraments against a fanatical insistence on the necessity of a detailed conformity to ancient usage."[1]

There was small reason, however, for sympathy for either party. The superstition of the one side matched the narrowness of the other. The Bohemian reformers won a temporary victory, and carried the communion cup on a pole, as the banner of their triumphant legions; but their triumph was of short duration; the thing they had fought for was not worth winning, and they soon relapsed into abject conformity to the old ritual.

Later Reformers, however, restored the use of the cup; the Roman Catholic Church alone with-

[1] *Christian Institutions*, p. 104.

holds it from the laity. In the Greek Church the bread and wine are mingled, and administered to communicants with a spoon.

One usage in connection with the Lord's Supper was universal in the ancient church, and persisted until the thirteenth century, but has now nearly disappeared from Christendom. This was the holy kiss, the kiss of peace — which is frequently enjoined in the Epistles. At the moment when the words of the service known as the "Sursum Corda" were spoken, —

"Lift up your hearts!
We lift them up unto the Lord,"

the whole congregation exchanged this salutation. "Sometimes," says Stanley, "the men kissed the men; sometimes the women the women; sometimes it was without distinction." It was, I believe, finally decreed that kissing should be restricted to those of the same sex. In the thirteenth century this observance was greatly modified. A small tablet of wood, called the pax or pax board, on which was engraved some scriptural scene or symbol, was introduced into the service; this was kissed by the officiating priest at the proper time, then handed by the acolytes to the other clergy to be kissed by them, and then passed through the congregation for the same purpose. The kiss of congregation for the same purpose. The kiss of peace had been the symbol of fraternity; the kissing of the pax was the symbol of a symbol. This wooden substitute does not seem to have been very popular, and soon fell into desuetude.

Among the Coptic Christians the kiss of peace is still part of the communion service. "Travelers now living," says Dean Stanley, "have had their faces stroked and been kissed by the Coptic priest, in the cathedral at Cairo, whilst at the same moment everybody was kissing everybody else throughout the church. Had any primitive Christians been told that the time would come when this, the very sign of brotherhood and sisterhood, would be absolutely proscribed in the Christian church, they would have thought that this must be the sign of unprecedented persecution or unprecedented unbelief. It is impossible to imagine the omission of any act more sacred, more significant, more necessary (according to the view which then prevailed), to the edification of the service." In the Western church, one small Scottish sect, the Glassites or Sandemanians,—to which, by the way, the illustrious Faraday belonged,—still observes this rite. This sect also keeps the ancient love-feast and practices feet-washing, like the Tunkers of America.

About the same time that infant baptism began to be practiced, the administration of the communion to infants was also introduced into the early church. Doubtless the same idea at that time underlay both usages,—the idea that the sacrament possessed some inherent or magical power. Baptism regenerated the child; the Lord's Supper also imparted spiritual life and vigor to

[1] *Christian Institutions*, p. 63.

him. The infant in both cases was unconscious; the sacrament produced its effect upon him without any cooperation of his intelligence or his will. It is what is called an *opus operatum*; it did its work upon the soul in just the same way that food or medicine does its work upon the body. I do not quite understand why infant communion has been abandoned in the Roman Catholic Church; the Greek Church still practices it. Those who believe that infant baptism signifies the parents' belief in the universal Fatherhood of God, and is the enrollment of the child by name in that household of faith to which by birth he belongs, have good reason for continuing this practice, although they may not believe that any change whatever is made by it in the character of the child; but infant communion could not of course be practiced unless it were believed that the rite possesses some inherent power of changing the child's nature. If it does possess that power, there is no good reason why it should not be administered to infants as well as to adults.

The Supper, as observed by the first disciples, was, as we have seen, a simple evening meal, at which the bread as broken by our Lord, and the wine as poured forth by him, reminded the partakers of his human life among them, and his death of self-sacrifice for them. But when the Lord's Supper was separated from the love-feast and erected into a special ecclesiastical service, other and higher meanings began to be attributed to it. "As early

as the second century," says one authority, "Justin Martyr and Irenæus advance the opinion that the mere bread and wine became, in the Eucharist, something higher,—the earthly something heavenly,—without, however, ceasing to be bread and wine. Though these views were opposed by some eminent individual Christian teachers, . . . yet, both among the people and in the ritual of the church, more particularly after the fourth century, the miraculous or supernatural view of the Lord's Supper gained ground. After the third century the office of presenting the bread and wine came to be confined to the ministers or priests. This practice arose from, and in turn strengthened, the notion which was gaining ground, that in this act of presentation by the priest a sacrifice similar to that once offered up in the death of Christ, though bloodless, was ever anew presented to God. This still deepened the feeling of mysterious significance and importance with which the rite of the Lord's Supper was viewed, and led to that gradually increasing splendor of celebration which, under Gregory the Great (590), took the form of the mass."

Out of this gradually grew the doctrine of transubstantiation,—the belief that under the hands of the consecrating priest the bread and wine of the sacrament become the actual body and blood of Christ. This is the doctrine to-day of both the Roman and the Greek Catholic churches.

At the time of the Reformation this doctrine

furnished one of the battle-grounds of the Reformers, who not only rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine, but differed widely among themselves.

Luther, for his part, was rather conservative in his views of this sacrament. He rejected transubstantiation, but substituted for it what the theologians call con-substantiation, what he called impanation. He denied that the bread and wine of the sacrament do themselves become the body and blood of Christ; but he maintained that the real body and blood of Christ are actually there, where the bread and wine are, in, with, and under it. The bread and wine are still bread and wine; no magical change has passed upon them; but just as the divine nature of Christ was present with his human nature, so the real body and blood of Christ are present with the bread and the wine.

Zwingli, on the other hand, maintained that the rites was purely symbolic; that the words of the Lord, — "This is my body," "This is my blood," meant only, "This represents my body and my blood" — that the service was simply commemorative.

Calvin undertook to maintain a view midway between these two, — that the bread and wine are in themselves mere symbols; but that at the moment of partaking of them the faithful are brought into a real spiritual union with Christ and receive divine grace immediately from him; that *the supper is a medium* through which grace is imparted to the believing soul.

Such are the three principal explanations of the nature of this sacrament. In the Roman Catholic view, a miraculous or supernatural transformation of the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ takes place when the elements are consecrated; and thus the priest offers upon the altar a real sacrifice — the unbloody sacrifice — to God, by which his favor is secured. These miraculously transformed elements also possess in themselves efficacy, by which the moral and spiritual health and strength of those partaking of them is increased. The question respecting the attitude of the recipient is one with which the Roman Catholic theologians do not always deal satisfactorily. But I think that I may say that the Catholic doctrine teaches that any baptized person who is not in mortal sin receives some benefit from the sacrament if he simply does not resist its influence; if he is acquiescent when he partakes of it. The sacrament, by an energy of grace which is inherent in it, will impart benefit to him if he does not counteract it by his will. Of course it is taught that the more perfectly responsive he is to its action, the more good it will do him; but even to those who are passively acquiescent it will communicate some grace. There is an efficacious power in the sacrament itself which does not depend on the exercise of faith by the recipient.

I do not state this theory to controvert it; for it is probable that few of my readers believe in the miracle of the mass, or regard the sacrament as pos-

sessing any such inherent power to change character; though there are those among our Episcopal brethren whose theory of the efficacy of the sacraments approximates to the Roman Catholic theory.

To most of us the sacrament is a symbolical rather than a literal transaction: a memorial and not a miracle; supernatural only as everything spiritual is supernatural.

Let us see if we can state, with some carefulness, just what this sacrament does signify to you and me.

In the first place, it is a memorial of One very dear to us,—One to whom we owe more than to any one else who has ever lived upon the earth. We think it well to cherish the memory of great benefactors; surely here is One who has done more for this world than any other born of woman. It was Theodore Parker who apostrophized him in the words: "O thou Great Friend to all the sons of men!" I am speaking as a student of history when I say that the life and death of Jesus Christ have meant more for good to this world than any other event which has happened upon this planet. It must be well for us to recall, now and then, with some care and seriousness, an event like this and to spend a little time in reflecting upon it.

The question of the frequency of such observances is one of expediency. I own that I find myself rather inclining, of late years, to the Scottish idea that a less frequent observance would be more salutary. If we had the sacrament three times

a year instead of six, — on the first of February, the first of June, and the first of October, say, — and then admitted members not merely on communion Sundays, but on the first Sunday of every month, — my belief is that we should gain more than we should lose in impression and benefit from the celebration.

This is, however, a subordinate matter. The value of such a commemorative service to any one who rightly uses it cannot, I think, be questioned. It must be profitable for us to recall, as we sit before this table, the life of this Great Friend of ours, the words of wisdom and gentleness that he spoke, the great truths that he made plain to us, the gracious ministry of help and healing and sympathy to which his life was given, the patience with which he bore the spite and scorn and violence of the brutal men whom he sought to bless, the unresisting meekness with which he went to death, conquering him by enduring it, and winning by his death the contrite love of the men who slew him. To spend an hour, now and then, in simply recalling all that we know about him, in meditating upon this character, in comparing our own habitual thinking and living with this standard, must be a profitable exercise for every one of us.

Besides, there is a certain relation to ourselves which this suffering life sustains which we must not ignore. We are contemplating a vicarious sacrifice — not a vicarious punishment, which is a very different thing. The sacrifice which a mother

makes for her child is a vicarious sacrifice; she suffers for him, on his behalf, but she is not published in his stead. The central fact of the Incarnation is the identification of Christ with humanity. The Son of God he was, in the highest sense, and he was also the Son of man. All that he did and suffered was for us men, not penally in our stead, but vicariously in our behalf. It was his great love for humankind that made him do what he did and bear what he endured; we are, whether we acknowledge him or not, the beneficiaries of his self-sacrificing love. The world we live in is a vastly different world from what it would have been if he had not lived and died in it; and it must be impossible for us to reflect on all this without being touched with a sense of our deep indebtedness to him.

But there is something more than memory, something deeper than gratitude, in the heart of him who worthily observes this ordinance. When it is all that it ought to be, it becomes — what we commonly call it — a *communion*, — *communio*. And a communion is simply a fellowship. The deepest purpose of the sacrament is not only to help us to think about him, and to be grateful to him, but also to bring us into vital, spiritual fellowship with him, so that we shall have his mind in us, and be partakers of his nature; so that his life shall be reproduced in our lives, and we shall in some measure learn to see the world with his eyes, to think as he thought, and to feel as he felt, and to act as

he acted. This is the real significance of the symbolism of the Supper. The bread and wine represent the body and the blood of Christ; his body in his personality, and the blood is the vital element of it, which is love. Now just as the bread and the wine of which we partake are taken up by the organs of digestion and assimilation, and become part of ourselves, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, so by our thought and our love the spiritual elements of Christ's personality, his thought and his love, become part of us; we become partakers of his life, of his nature. There is nothing miraculous about this; it is precisely the same thing that happens to us when we are brought into living sympathy with any strong, wise, loving human spirit. Something of his strength and wisdom and love passes into our spirits, and becomes part of ourselves. And precisely thus in our communion with the spiritual Christ do we become partakers of his life.

"Christ is present in the elements," says President Hyde, "just as the writer of a letter is present in the writing. The reading of a letter is the reception of the writer's mind and heart. We receive Christ in the bread and wine just as we receive a friend when we clasp his hand. All communion between persons must be by symbols. As Professor Dewey says in his 'Psychology,' 'The first step in the communication of a fact of individual consciousness is changing it from a psychical fact to a physical fact. It must be expressed

through non-conscious media, the appearance of the face or the use of sounds. These are purely external. The next step is for some other individual to translate this expression or these sounds into his own consciousness. He must make them part of himself before he knows what they are. One individual never knows directly what is in the self of another; he knows it only so far as he is able to reproduce it in his own self.'

"Jesus in instituting the Lord's Supper has simply made external the communication of his sacrificial love. He has made the bread and wine forever, and to all who receive it, the symbol of the life he lived and the death he suffered in love to all mankind. In itself, it is mere bread and wine. Translated by the intelligent and devout recipient into terms of the love and sacrifice it is intended to express, it becomes the bread of life and the wine of love to as many as receive it in this faith. Being an objective institution, coming at stated times and places, it is independent of the wayward caprice, the fickle mood, the listless mind of the individual. And so it calls us back from our worldliness, deepens our penitence, quickens our love, and intensifies our consecration; and, above all, identifies us with the great company of our fellow Christians, as no mere subjective devotion and private prayer could ever do."[1]

[1] *Outlines of Social Theology*, pp. 194-196.

XIV

THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY

"If a man die," said Job mournfully, "shall he live again?" It is the question of the ages. Who can confidently answer it? What assurance have we of the fullness of life beyond the grave? As for Job he had none. His question implies a negative answer. Doubtless he believed in some dim, shadowy, slumberous existence beyond the grave, but it was nothing that we could call life. The conception of the ancient Hebrews was substantially the same as that of the Homeric poems. "Homer," says Dr. Gordon, "contemplates death as a calamity; with him, life after death is a helpless existence in the regions of murky gloom." In the Odyssey, Homer tells us of the visit of Odysseus to the underworld and of his sorrow as he greeted there the "strengthless dead" whom he had known in life. Agamemnon came forth to meet Odysseus; he knew him instantly, "and he cried aloud, and let the big tears fall, and stretched forth his hand eagerly to grasp me. But no, there was no strength nor vigor left, such as was once within his supple limbs. I wept to see him, and I pitied him from my heart." "Mock not at death,"

says the spirit of Achilles to Odysseus. "Better to be the hireling of a stranger, and serve a man of mean estate whose living is small, than be ruler over all those dead and gone." The Hebrew poet puts the case more tersely when he says: "A living dog is better than a dead lion." These ancients hold to some continuance of being after death, but it was only the ghostly simulacrum of life for which they looked.

You may be thinking of those often quoted words of Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." It is doubtful whether there is another text in the Bible which has been more misused than this one. Translators have read their own meanings into it, instead of trying to reproduce the thoughs of Job. Job has been grossly accused by his three friends; they have insisted that his calamities are punishments inflicted upon him by the Judge of all the earth, for his own evil deeds; he knows that this cannot be, and he declares that his Vindicator will by and by appear, and do him justice; even though his skin be destroyed, yet from his flesh he will see God, his Vindicator, who will stand on his side and acquit him of these accusations. That is the whole of it; there is no suggestion here of a resurrection of the body, or the continuance of being after death in a bodily form. We do not go back to those dark days for evidences of the life to come. The

conceptions on which our own belief rests were not then fully formed in the minds of men. The expectation of immortality has been, in large measure, the product of a moral evolution. The basis of this expectation is far broader and far deeper now than it was two thousand years ago.

Yet it ought to be said at the outset that we have no scientific demonstration of immortality. No future event can be scientifically demonstrated. All the astronomers and physicists on earth cannot prove that the sun will not to-morrow not rise. The future, to the scientific man as well as to the religious man, is the domain of faith, not of knowledge. I cannot undertake to furnish any man with proof drawn from mathematical or physical science that there is life for him beyond the grave. So far as our reasoning faculties are concerned, the life to come can be to us nothing more than a rational probability. And this probability will not rest on any single line of evidence, but on considerations drawn from many different groups of facts and experiences. The cable of that anchor of hope by which our hearts are held to the life everlasting is braided of many strands. I shall try to bring before your thought some of the elements which are woven into this great expectation.

And first it may be well to say negatively that although physical science can give us no proof of immortality it is equally impotent to furnish any disproof of it. We know, indeed, that the mind, in the present state of existence, uses the body as its

medium of communication with the outside world; we do not know that the mind may not be separated from this body, and may not find other instruments and organs. Certain nervous changes always take place in the human body when the human mind is thinking, but these nervous changes are not thought, any more than the mechanical motion of my hand when I write is a process of thinking. "We may succeed," says Professor Ferrier, "in determining the exact nature of the molecular changes which occur in the brain cells when a sensation is experienced; but this will not bring us one whit nearer the explanation of the ultimate nature of that which constitutes the sensation." The one is objective and the other subjective; and neither can be expressed in terms of the other. We cannot say that they are identical, or even that the one passes into the other, but only, as Laycock expresses it, that they are correlated.

But while biological and chemical science can neither prove nor disprove the separate existence of the soul, and its continuance after the death of the body, there are certain large considerations, drawn from the philosophy of evolution, which lend great strength to that belief. I quoted largely, in the first chapter, from Mr. Fiske's recent remarkable essay on "The Everlasting Reality of Religion," to show that the elements of religion had been evolved in the upward movement of the race; that these elements of religion are universal constituents of human nature; and that it is just as

unphilosophical and preposterous, according to the doctrine of evolution, that such organs of faith should be developed in human beings, without any corresponding spiritual realities with which they could be coordinated, as it would be to suppose that the eye could have been developed where there was no light, or the ear where there was no sound. The existence of these spiritual faculties in man, as the outcome of evolution, is proof that there is a spiritual world with which they are coordinated.

Now Mr. Fiske tells us that one of the elements of religion which is essential and universal is the belief in the continuance, in some form, of the human soul after death. "The savage custom of burying utensils and trinkets for the use of the departed ones on," he says, "to trace it back into the glacial period. We may safely say that for more than a hundred thousand years mankind have regarded themselves as personally interested in two worlds,—the physical world which daily greets our waking senses, and another world, comparatively dim and vaguely outlined, with which the psychical side of humanity is more closely connected. This belief in the Unseen World seems to be coextensive with theism; the animism of the lowest savage includes both. No race or tribe of men has ever been found destitute of belief in a ghost world. A ghost world implies a personal continuance of human beings after death, and it also implies identity of nature between the ghosts of man and the indwelling spirits of sun,

wind, and flood. It is chiefly because these ideas are so closely interwoven in savage thought that it is often so difficult to discriminate between fetichism and animism. These savage ideas are of course extremely crude in their symbolism. With the gradual civilization of human thinking the refinement in the conception of the Deity is paralleled by the refinement in the conception of the other World. From Valhalla to Dante's Paradise what an immeasurable distance the modern mind has traveled!

"In our modern monotheism the assumption of kinship between God and the human soul is the assumption that there is in man a psychical element, identical in nature with that which is eternal. Belief in a quasi-human God and belief in the soul's immortality thus appear in their origin and development, as in their ultimate significance, to be inseparably connected. They are part and parcel of one and the same effloressence of the human mind."[1]

This argument rests, as you see, upon the integrity of what you may call Nature, — if you choose so to name it. Nature, let us say, has been at work for a good many hundred thousand years, in producing man. It has fitted him with certain powers and aptitudes, and these always correspond to the conditions of his environment. It has developed the eye, and there is the light which puts him into visual relations with surrounding objects.

[1] *Through Nature to God*, pp. 169, 170.

It has developed the ear, and the waves of sound bring him messages from the outside world. It has endowed him with the great mathematical conceptions,—the ideas of number and form,—and every existence that he finds in the space that surrounds him repeats to him these ideas, and verifies to him the thought that is native to his mind. The world without corresponds to the soul within.[1] If this is the method of Nature, then Numbers are deep-seated, as persistent, as universal as the religious faculties must have something corresponding to them in the universe.[2] If the mathematical faculty implies a mathematical world, why does not the spiritual faculty imply a spiritual world? The reality of all these other correspondences argues the reality of religion.

For, as Mr. Fiske told us in the first chapter, these religious faculties are entitled to rank among the very highest in our nature. "One aspect of the fact," he says, "not to be lightly passed over in that religion, thus selected upon the same level with the birth of humanity, has played such a dominant part in the subsequent evolution of human society that what history would be without it is quite beyond our imagination. As to the dimensions of this cardinal fact there thus can be no question. None can deny that it is the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the existence of mankind upon the earth."[3]

That Nature for a thousand aeons should have

[1] *Through Nature to God*, pp. 188, 189.

employed herself in awakening, refining, enlarging, strengthening, the religious impulses in the soul of man, when there were no objective facts toward which these impulses could be directed, is not, I think, to the philosophic mind, a credible supposition. Our faith in the integrity of the universe is our warrant for believing that the primary conceptions of religion are everlasting realities. And these rudimentary elements of religion are, in the words of Mr. Fiske, "first, belief in Deity as quasi-human; secondly, belief in an Unseen World in which human beings continue to exist after death; thirdly, recognition of the ethical aspects of human life as related in a special and intimate sense to this Unseen World. These three elements are alike indispensable. If any one of the three be taken away the remnant cannot properly be called a religion."[1]

It may be said — it is often said by those who imagine that they are thus getting rid of spiritual realities — that the faculties of man are the result of natural forces working upon him; that the eye, for example, was produced by the action of the light upon some sensitive surface; that the light playing upon the pigment stirred it, assembled and organized its tissues, and thus, during ages of transmitted and slowly developed visual powers, created the wonderful organ which we call the eye. But it would seem, to begin with, that there must have been in that sensitive pigment some capacity

[1] *Through Nature to God*, pp. 134, 135.

and some tendency to respond to the action of the light. The sunshine awakens and develops the plant germ, but the germ was there to awaken. The light may well have been the agency through which the eye was developed, but the preparation of the living tissues for the action of the light was not, probably, neglected. And the same thing is true of the religious faculties. It is not only true that their existence argues a spiritual realm with which they are in communion, it is also true that they exist because of the direct action of the powers of that spiritual realm upon human intelligence. It is no more true that the bodily eye is the effect of the action of the light upon sensitive physical tissues than that the spiritual vision, by which we discern God, has been quickened and developed by the direct action of the spirit of God upon our spirits. For God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; and it is in his light that we see light. The idea of God in the soul of man is the response to direct impressions of God made upon that soul itself. "Reality," says Dr. Gordon, "casts its own image in the mind, and God, as Reality, has shadowed himself in the soul." There is no adequate account of God other than the fact of God. Similarly with duty it is an ultimate fact: there is no complete explanation of it short of its recognition as the effect in man's spirit of moral law. The idea of immortality belongs with those of God and duty. It comes spontaneously because of a perceived invisible and spiritual order to which the

soul belongs. There is an instinctive feeling of kinship between that order and the human spirit. Upon the human spirit that order makes the impression that its home is eternal in the heavens."[1]

The presence of these feelings in the human soul is thus accounted for by the strict application of the evolutionary philosophy. They must, according to this philosophy, have arisen from the action and reaction of the soul of man and its environment; and the whole logic of evolution goes to establish the fact that God and the spiritual world are the commanding facts in the environment of the human intelligence.

Another argument from analogy rests on the great scientific doctrine of the persistence of force. It is assumed as the foundation of all scientific reasoning, and is proved by a wide induction of facts, that no force is lost; that forms of energy are simply transformed in the physical and chemical changes. Motion is changed into heat, and heat into light and electricity; and the chemical changes that take place in the processes of life and death are simply transformations of energy. The food that we take into the system is transformed into blood and tissue and nervous force; and the death of the body is a simple redistribution of these chemical elements. To the physical world nothing is lost by this redistribution. Every particle of force in the body enters into other combinations and goes on with its work. "Evolution teaches us," says one writer, "that no

[1] *The Witness to Immortality*, p. 26.

force can be destroyed: it can only be transmitted." If this is true of the physical forces, how about the spiritual forces? The force that manifests itself as reason, will, conscience, affection — is not that a real force? That it can be resolved into atoms of hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon is believed, I think, by very few scientific men at the present day. It belongs to a different series, and there is no evidence whatever that the two pass into each other. What then becomes, at death, of the force which manifests itself as reason, will, conscience, affection? Does that come to an abrupt termination? Is nature careful to carry over the forces of the physical series, while she drops the forces of the spiritual series? Does she give to the lower part of man's nature the power of continuance, while she denies it to the higher? Is chemical affinity a more precious thing in the universe than spiritual affection? Must atoms endure while spirits decay?

Another and more familiar argument is drawn from the conception which evolution gives us of the final cause of its own great processes. It does not seem to justify itself to our reason, unless it promises us an endless future for the human race. Let me quote a few words from Dr. Gordon's clear restatement of this argument:—

"Man is Nature's highest product, and he is a product of inconceivable cost. Toward him Nature has been looking forward from a past indefinitely remote. When she was concerned chiefly with the dance of atoms, with the play of the primitive fiery

mist, she had the thought of him in her great heart; when she was elaborating worlds, setting the solar system on high, forming this planet of ours, and preparing it for life, man was still her darling idea, and in the vast procession of life from the barely to the highly organized, he was never for one moment out of sight.[1] The evolution, running through countless ages, in innumerable forms, at a cost of energy and suffering inconceivably great, was all the while aspiring to manhood. The whole creation groaned and travailed in pain until the manifestation of the sons of God. Man is Nature's last and costliest product. The flower of being is intelligence and love. The outcome of evolution through self-seeking is a form of being that confronts self-seeking as no longer an unlooseable friend, but a disastrous embarrassment, thus begins through self-sacrifice a yet more stupendous evolution. Can it be that this last and finest product of Nature, this result of intelligence and love aimed at from the beginning, and reached at a cost immeasurable, shall not be conserved in growing beauty and power forever? Physical evolution finds its goal in man, and the process that brought beings finds its end in the complete realization of his ethical and spiritual nature.

This is the argument, and to some minds it will have great force. For every order of existence below man there is something higher and nobler toward which to reach upward. Evolution has

[1] *The Witness to Immortality*, p. 20.

been conducting this æglong progress from mollusk up to man. "From cosmic dust," says Dr. Mungor, "man has become a true person. What now? The end of the demiurgic strife reached, its methods cease. Steps lead up to the apex of the pyramid. What remains? . . . What, indeed, but flight, if he be found to have wings? . . . Or does he stand for a moment on the summit, exulting in his emergence from nature, only to fall back into the abyss at its base? There is a reason why the reptile should become a mammal: it is more life. Is there no like reason for man? Shall he not have more life? If not, then he is a reptile is better than to be a man, for it can be more than itself; and man, instead of being the head of nature, goes to its foot. The drama of pessimism becomes a reality, justifying the remark of Schopenhauer that consciousness is the mistake and malady of nature. If man becomes no more than he is, the whole process of gain and advance by which he has become what he is turns on itself and reverses its order. The benevolent purpose, seen at every stage till it yields to the next, stops its action, dies out, and goes no farther. The ever-swelling bubble of existence, that has grown and distended till it reflects the light of heaven in all its glorious tints, bursts on the instant into nothingness." [1]

The impossibility of entertaining such a pessimistic view of the whole history of life on the earth drives us to the conclusion that the crown of

[1] *The Appeal to Life*, p. 209.

life is immortality All the reasons which I have produced for believing in the continuance of life beyond the grave have been drawn from the doctrine of evolution, and the modern scientific theories closely connected with it. Fifty years ago no such reasonings as these could have occurred to any Christian thinker. I know not how they may have impressed other minds; to my own they come home with great power. So far as I have a reasoned theory of the existence of God and of the future life, it rests, very largely, on the truth brought to light by the evolutionary philosophy. All who will take pains to find out what are the larger implications of this philosophy will, like Mr. John Fiske, find their faith in the everlasting reality of religion deepened and confirmed.

Many other lines of argument might be followed; I must content myself with alluding to two or three considerations only.

The testimony of Jesus Christ is to me a word of authority. Above all who have lived on this planet he was surely Master of the lore of the spirit. His insight into character, his revelation of man to himself, and of God to man, show him to have had a knowledge of the deep things such as no other teacher has possessed. Just as I would take the word of Edison or Tesla about the laws of electricity, just as I would take the word of Peirce on a question of mathematics, or of Gray on a question of botany, certainly, with not less confidence, would I take the word of Jesus Christ upon

any great question of the spirit. And his word is always clear and positive and unhesitating. "We speak that we do know," he says, "and testify that we have seen." There is with him no argument to prove the life to come; it is assumed as one of the indubitable certainties. Nay, our Lord demonstrates it, as it were; he brings it right home to our every-day experience; his word is not immortality — that seems something future, and far away — he calls it eternal life. It begins here, he tells us; we may be living it now. There is a kind of life that in its very nature it destitutes; it carries in its own momentum. The is the life that he is living. They who share his life have the witness in themselves; for them there is no doubt. The testimony of Jesus is to me a great and solemn assurance, and I rest my soul upon it without fear.

The other sure foundation for this belief is in the truth which Jesus clearly and fully threw the light, — the truth that the Eternal God is our Father. This, as we have seen, is one of the three great realities of religion; but this is first and greatest of them all. On this everything that makes life dear and beautiful finally depends. If this is true all is well; life is sweet and death is gain. If God's is his heaven, all's right with the world — with all the worlds. If God is good, if God is our Father, the life unending is our sure portion. Faith in Him is guarantee to us that our highest hopes and purest aspirations will not mock us; that we shall not "be cast as rubbish to the

void" when the curtain falls upon the last scene of all that ends this strange, eventful history. The hunger of the heart for more life, and fuller life, the deepest craving that we know, and in the noblest souls it is the strongest. Who of us has approached the goal of his aspiration? Who does not feel in his most exalted moments the poverty of his attainments, the incompleteness of his life. So little do we know, so vast is the chasm between what we have meant to be and what we are, that if death were the end of it all our sense of the failure of life would come down upon us with crushing weight. Yet this very consciousness of incompleteness, this outreaching of the soul for more life, and fuller, is proof of immortality, if God is good. This is Kant's great argument. "Be perfect," is the mighty voice that through every soul forever reverberates. "But for us perfection can only be reached by endless progress toward an endlessly receding goal." Therefore man must have eternity as the field of his moral development. No smaller opportunity is large enough for his powers. The moral ideal is the soul, the categorical imperative of duty, are the outfit for a life unending. Because God is good it must be that we can be what we know we ought to be. And that means more days than were ever given to any man upon this earth.

Every man, at his best, has the consciousness not only of incompleteness, but of unexhausted powers. As we draw toward the end of life our

conception of the vastness of the work opening before us, of the multitude of the things that we might do if there were only time, constantly enlarges. The word of the Master begins to be intelligible: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." We are just getting ready to work, just beginning to feel the pressure of the great motives of life, when the evening shadows fall, and the day's work is done. If this is the end, existence is a mockery: if God is good, those whose deepest desire is to glorify Him will have another day.

But there is a profounder truth than this. It is not only true that an Infinite Father must give to the children of his love the opportunity of realizing the impulses that He has planted in their souls and of doing the work that He is calling them to do, it is also true that if the life of God, which is the life of love, be the inspiration of our lives, we have in ourselves the foretaste of immortality. "God is love," says the great apostle: "and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." To such a life as that, what change can come but that which leads from strength to strength, from glory to glory? And every one of us whose heart is the home of a pure affection knows something of what this means. For love, as Dr. Munger says, "cannot tolerate the thought of its own end. It has but one word, — forever. Its language is, There is no death." This is the thought which glorifies Tennyson's "In Memoriam." As Dr.

Gordon says, "The poem as a prophecy of immortality has its foundations in fact, the fact of love and its quality. . . . It is in a very large sense a poem of the reason, a vital movement of thought through all difficulties into the conviction that God is love and that love is imperishable."[1]

Thus we have separated by our thought, that we might write them again by our larger reason, the strands that form the cable by which the anchor of the soul is held to that within the veil. Each of these considerations seems to me very strong, all of them together form an argument of faith on which our souls may repose. Our confidence in the integrity of Nature and in the persistence of spiritual forces; our belief that evolution does not bring us up to the summits of existence, there to plunge us back again into nonentity; our trust in the testimony of Jesus, to whom is given the word of eternal life; our faith in the holiness of God, who will not mock us by setting before us an impossible ideal, — all join to confirm our expectation of life beyond the grave. It is an ennobling confidence. In the days of darkness, in the hours when the burdens are heavy and the combat is fierce, it lifts up the head and lightens the heart. It is sometimes said to be a selfish faith, — this faith in the life everlasting. But I see not how the triumph of love can be the gain of selfishness. And the man who has the faith most firmly planted in his heart is the man whose life is rooted and

[1] *The Witness to Immortality*, pp. 125, 126.

grounded in love. One may have some intellectual reasons for believing in it, but that strong expectation of it which fills the heart with assurance in the presence of those only who have something more than selfish ends to live for. Men who have renounced their individual happiness," says Count Folnesi, "never doubt their immortality. Christ knew that he would continue to live after death because he had already entered into the true life which cannot cease." He lived even then in the very spirit and power of life toward which he was advancing, and he saw then reflected on those who stood around him. And this every man who renounces his own good beholds; he passes in this life into a new relation with the world for which there is no death, and this experience gives him an immovable faith in the stability, immortality, and eternal growth of life." And here is the whole secret of this relation of If you live the kind of life that ought to last, you will find it easy to believe in life eternal; if you live the kind of life that ought to perish, you must not expect that any of the proofs of future existence will bring any strong assurance to your soul.

To every one of us, as the days of our years pass swiftly, as a tale that is told, and the friends of our hearts one by one go on before us into the world of the unseen, this expectation of the life to come ought to grow stronger and clearer. It may be a jubilant hope, like that of the buoyant Browning, who, in his very last verses, hailed with

a shout of triumph the portals before which so many tremble:—

"At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where — by death, fools think, imprisoned —
Low as lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
— Pity me?

"Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the unmarked, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless dirt I drivel,
— Being — who?

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

"No, as moonlight in the heats of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer.
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
'Strive and thrive!' cry 'Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!'"

Or it may be that the assurance will come to us in that serener and more peaceful mood of Tennyson's last poem:—

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me;
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home!

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark;
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;
For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

But whether we come to the end of life exultant, as the winner reaches the goal, or whether with hands folded on the quiet breast we drift upon the outgoing tide to the shoreless ocean, let us trust that in all our hearts there may abide the hope that cannot fail, and the peace that passeth knowledge!

XV

THE THOUGHT OF HEAVEN

The principle of contrast has been overworked in religious philosophy. The relativity of knowledge implies that we have no comprehension of anything except as we compare it with something else, and unlikeness strikes crude minds more forcibly than likeness. Cold is more easily distinguished from heat than different degrees of cold or heat are distinguished from each other. Our more juvenile conceptions are apt to array themselves in antitheses: white, black; long, short; quick, slow; high, low; hard, soft; good, bad. The child generally assumes that everything is either white or black, and that everybody is either good or bad. And there are children of a larger growth who carry this habit of contrast into all their thinking, and put most of the individuals and the groups of whom they think into antithetical categories, — as saint, sinner; patriot, traitor; Protestant, Catholic; orthodox, infidel; Republican, Democrat, — with the notion that these stand over against each other in definite antagonisms; that everybody must be the one or the other, and that all which can be affirmed of the one can be denied of the other.

There is a kind of philosophy of history which makes use of this method; which assumes that the forces which make for progress are conflicting forces; that one period of time comes to a crisis and ends with a crash, and is then succeeded by another period in which powers exactly opposed to those formerly prevailing bear rule. The theory of history which is based on this conception is a theory of catastrophe and metabasis; the leading idea is contrast rather than continuity, conquest and not progress. Such a historian would be inclined to regard the Christian dispensation as the antithesis of the Jewish dispensation, and the American government as the antithesis of the English government. But there is another theory of the universe which our minds are becoming more and more familiar, — namely, that the deepest law of life is a law of unfolding rather than of antagonism, of continuity more than of contrast. Each period of time, according to this theory, has its roots in the period which preceded it; history is not a succession of breaks and weldings, but an orderly progress. One who accepts this theory can easily believe what Christ said about the relation of the kingdom which he came to found to the Jewish economy which had preceded it, — that the one is simply the continuation and completion of the other. "Think not, that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." To such a thinker, American institutions will appear to be as closely connected

with English institutions as the stem is with the root.

This conception, which helps to unify the whole of life, which binds the past and the future together in a generic relation, will greatly help us in answering our question, "What do we know about heaven?" The prevalent notion has been, no doubt, that heaven is the antithesis of earth. That thought has held comfort for many troubled and weary souls. In the midst of persecution and trials, it has always been reassuring for men to look away to the land beyond the grave and to say, "When we shall have reached that good place these miseries will no more overtake us." Thus, setting the safety and the purity and the blessedness of heaven over against the danger and the sin and the sorrow of earth, it was natural enough that men should extend the contrast to every other feature of the two conditions, and learn to think of heaven as in all respects the antithesis of earth. But this is not, probably, the main truth about it. Paul couples the life that now is and that which is to come as if they were all of a piece ; the same qualities of character give us both ; both grow from the same root ; the one is but the completion of the other. And this, we may assume, is the true conception. When the first heaven and the first earth shall have passed away from the view of any of us, and we find ourselves under a new heaven and in a new earth, I am fain to believe that it will not seem to us a strange place at all.

It is pleasant for me to think that the life to come will not greatly differ in its characteristic features from the life that now is.

Let us speak, first of those elements of the heavenly life that are known to us, proceeding thus, by the true method of science, from the known to the unknown. I once heard a preacher tell a vast audience that no one knew anything about heaven except what the Bible tells him. The truth is that unless a man knows something about heaven that neither the Bible nor any other book can tell him, he will never find heaven, even though he take the wings of the morning, and range through space for ages. The substance of heaven, the heart of it all, is within us; and we do not need to cry, "Lo here! or lo there!" pointing to promises in a book or to portents in the sky. That which is central and essential in life for every human being is character. The moral and spiritual elements make up the perfection of life in all worlds. Whether a man is in heaven, or not, depends, first of all, on what the man is. It is not the scenery, or the surroundings, that makes heaven; it is the spiritual harmony within. The waves of our common air often bear to us sweet strains of the music of the land to which we go:—

"We bless thee for thy peace, O Lord,
Deep as the unfathomed sea,
Which falls like manna on the road
Of those who trust in thee.

"That peace which suffers and is strong,
Trusts where it cannot see,

Deems not the trial way too long,
But leaves the end with thee;

"That peace which flows serene and deep,
A river in the soul,
Whose banks a living verdure keep,
God's goodness o'er the whole."

In words like these, we feel upon our foreheads the very breath that ripples the river of the water of life.

"My God, I thank thee who hast made
The earth so bright,
So full of splendor and of joy,
Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here
Noble and right.

"I thank thee, too, that Thou hast made
Joy to abound;
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round;
That in the darkest spot of earth
Some love is found.

"I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast kept
The best in store;
I have enough, yet not too much
To long for more,—
A yearning for a deeper peace
Not known before."

He who can speak such words truly has no need to climb to the heights, or fly to the far countries, in search of his heaven; the substance of it is already in his possession.

What the essential elements of the heavenly life will be we know perfectly. The truth and the trust, the purity and the peace, the abounding love

and the unselfish joy, which makes life worth living here will be integral principles of life in all worlds so long as humanity reflects the image of the divine.

We are not, then, drawing wholly on our imagination when we speak of the life to come. One who can measure a small arc of a curve whose sweep is billions of miles in extent, can picture the whole of it; he knows as well the direction it will take on the other side of Uranus as on this side. And one who knows what are the essential elements of moral and spiritual perfection in this world knows what is the substance of heaven.

But we often think of the form and manner of that life, the scenery and costume of it, and wish that we might know how it will look, how it will seem. Doubtless all of us do, sometimes, picture to ourselves the life of that country. We can hardly help doing so. Some that are very dear to us are dwelling there, and our imagination will follow them and frame the landscapes through which they are moving, the skies that bend over them, the tasks that employ them. The bare outline of such a picture I am going to sketch for you. And I ask you to remember that it is only an imagination. I do not say that the manner of the heavenly life is what I shall represent it to be; I only say, perhaps it is: it may be: this is the way I like to think it is. If any of you have a conception that better satisfies your thought hold on to that; I only offer you mine to think of in the hope

that it may make heaven seem to some of you more human and more homelike.

For this is my deepest thought about it: it will be home. That principle of continuity which guides all our thinking makes this highly probable. It will not be a foreign land; it will be the home-land.

I can imagine no heaven brighter than this world would be if sin and its consequences were abolished. And I always think of the form in which men will appear in heaven as being not unlike that in which they appeared on earth. No form more beautiful is within the range of my imagination than the physical ideal of humanity. The "human form divine," the poets call it, and that, I suppose, is the literal truth. (The archetype is divine.) The sculptor never tries to conceive of anything more shapely or more fair than this; he would realize his highest ambition if he could reproduce the type of beauty which the human form, in its manifold incarnations, suggests to us.

These two conceptions fit each other. If the world to come is to be in its scenery and its outward features similar to the world in which we live, such bodies as we now possess will seem to be adapted to it; and if, on the other hand, bodies similar to these should be ours in the other world, we might naturally expect the environment of that life to be similar to the environment of this life.

Is there any reason why the bodies we inhabit in the world to come should not be similar to those we

inhabit here? That they will be free from the deformity and the corruptibility of our mortal bodies we may indeed believe, but in form and substance why may they not be like these bodies?

Some one answers that Paul promises us spiritual bodies in the life to come. But what is a spiritual body? The phrase, according to ordinary definitions, is a contradiction in terms, if it is understood as describing the substance of the glorified body. Spirit and body are antithetical terms: a spirit is an incorporeal existence. If the words of Paul are taken ontologically they are, therefore, destitute of meaning; it is like speaking of a white blackbird or an ascending declivity. Paul does not, probably, mean to say that our heavenly bodies will be made of immaterial substance. I suppose that he must mean by a spiritual body a body that is perfectly under the control of the spirit; a body that is a fit organ for the spirit, that does not refract the light of God when it shines into the soul, but is a perfect medium for its transmission; a body that not only for purposes of impression, but also for purposes of expression, is the servant of the spirit. These earthly bodies often clog and hamper the spirit: their fleshly appetites fight against its aspirations; their infirmities paralyze its endeavors; but the bodies which we shall inhabit in the life to come will more perfectly answer the needs of the higher nature, and will aid instead of impeding the spirit's growth. This is why we call them spiritual bodies.

But another is reminded of these words of Paul: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Certainly not this flesh and blood, — not the materials which constitute these bodies: the physical substances of which they are composed are returned to the earth and the air. The notion that the identical matter of the physical organism which we leave behind for burial is to be reanimated is distinctly repudiated by Paul, and physiological science makes it impossible and absurd.

What then, you may ask, do we mean by the resurrection of the body? The question cannot be answered with any dogmatic assurance: I can only give what seems to me a possible explanation.

The human body, like every other physical organism, seems to be the product of a living principle which chemical analysis does not isolate. There is something behind these chemical laws that commands them. We know very little about this; we call it life: it is the builder that silently and with divine skill marshals the bioplasts and shapes the organism. Death is simply the abandonment by this silent builder of the materials upon which he has been at work. But there is no reason for believing that he dies; and, what we call the resurrection of the body may be only the calling of this builder up to a higher sphere, where, out of use during and incorruptible material, he constructs another tabernacle for the spirit, and thus, we who are unclothed of this mortal covering, are clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. But

if it shall be the same life principle which shall reconstruct our bodies there, then it is certain that their general type and pattern will be like those that we inhabit here. If the organizing principle is the same, the organism must at least be similar.

Certain reasonings confirm, in my thought, this expectation.

A large part of the education we receive in this world is in and through the bodily senses. From the moment when the infant begins to measure distances by putting forth his hand to grasp a candle that he cannot reach, to the last day of the old man's life, when his practiced eye scans the countenances of the watchers by his bedside to discern if he can their judgment concerning his fate, there is a constant accumulation of knowledge and discipline which have come into the soul through the portals of sense. Not only are new truths thus continually revealed to the mind, but the mind is also steadily acquiring new skill in the use of its human organs. Our senses are nice instruments, which during the whole of our life we are learning to operate; and the degree of experience which is thus acquired would be marvelous if it were not so common. How accurately, for example, do we learn at length to use the sense of touch; how perfectly do we discern shapes and surfaces and textures with our eyes closed. So with all the senses. We spend our years in learning to use them, and the proficiency we gain is wonderful. We marvel at the brilliant Paderewski when we see his swift fingers dance so

fairly up and down the keyboard. What wonderful mastery, we exclaim, of a wonderful instrument! But we do not often reflect that upon an instrument far more delicate, the human hand, we have all learned to perform far more wonderful feats of skill. Ysaye is listening to Paderewski: and your ear catches and individualizes and records every one of those rapidly uttered notes, forms them into musical phrases, detects and delights in the harmonies into which they are woven, presents, momently, to your thought, this marvelous complex of sweet sounds. And how manifold are the impressions hourly brought to your mind through this one avenue of sense! The whisper of the breeze, the rustle of the leaves, the buzz of the insect, the chirp of the grasshopper, the scream of the jay, the whistle of the distant locomotive, the click of the horse's hoofs and the rattle of wheels on the pavement, the shout of the children, the murmur of conversation in the next room, the ripple of the gas flame on the hearth — how quickly and surely do you distinguish these impressions made upon the ear by the vibrations of the air; how accurately, for the most part, do you judge of the distance and direction from which these sounds have come! All the senses, as I have said, are trained to a similar nicety and precision of action. We are not apt to count this as part of our education, because the most of it is gained unconsciously; but it is really a large and highly important portion of the best education.

Not only are we constantly adding to our skill in the use of the bodily senses, but they have played a large part in the formation of our characters. Most of our experiences of joy or grief, of pleasure or pain, are ministered to us through our senses. The mind is addressed, the emotions are awakened, the will is influenced, by impressions that come to us through the eye, the ear, the touch, the taste; temptations assail us through these avenues; the training of our intellect, our judgment, our power of choice, our power of resistance, has to do, continually, with our senses. In short, it may be said that all our knowledge is colored through and through with sense impressions; that all our moral and spiritual character has been built up out of experiences in which sensation is a large ingredient.

Now if the bodies we inhabit in the other world were unlike these, all the proficiency which we have gained in the use of the organs of sense would be worthless. Is it reasonable to suppose that the Creator would give us these tools to use, and keep us using them for a lifetime, and then when we had fairly gained the mastery of them would take them from us and set us to work with new ones? And when we find the elements of sensation mingled with all our accumulations of knowledge and experience and character, — woven through and through the whole of it, and no more separable from it than the warp is separable from the web, — how utterly inconceivable it is that we should be placed after death in conditions of life to which all

these elements of knowledge and character would be wholly irrelevant? It is much more reasonable to suppose that we shall have in the other life bodily organisms with which our spirits will be familiar, to the uses of which they are accustomed, than that we shall be placed in tabernacles all new and strange to us. I prefer to think that death will make no serious break in the continuity of our experience; that we shall take up the thread of existence on the other side as we lay it down on this side; and that while the tone of life will be heightened and its flavor sweetened, yet the ways of life will seem familiar,—the place will not be strange, the new texture of the spirit will not appear novel or unwonted. It may be something as one who comes back from a journey and finds his home improved and beautified,—many discomforts gone, the cramped rooms enlarged, the unsightliness put away, everything arranged as he had often wished to have it, yet still the same home, with the same dear associations, the same hearths to go to, the same windows to look out of, all the old quiet comforts left, all the old appointments calling him back to the old ways of living.

If, now, the form of our appearing in the world to come is similar to that which is vouchsafed us here, then it seems highly probable that the surroundings of life in that world will not be unlike those of the present life. External nature is kind to our needs in this world. Man and his environment were made for each other. Correlation is the

word that expresses the connection between man and the physical realm; and that law will hold good, no doubt, in the other world.

It will not surprise me, then, when I awake in that land of which we think so much, but of whose scenery we know so little, if I find myself in a country not greatly different from that which I have learned to love. If we have bodies like these, then landscapes like these we here look upon — hill and valley, forest and field, meadow and river, verdure and blossoms, sunny skies and smiling faith, all these freed from every soar of the spoiler, wearing no hint of decay or changefulness — will be pleasanter to our eyes and more instructive to our minds than any other scenes we could imagine.

No poem about heaven was ever written that took stronger hold of the hearts of men than that one of Dr. Watts, beginning,[1] "There is a land of pure delight." The instinct of humanity respond that if it is not a truthful picture of the heavenly world it is one that may well be true:—

> "There everlasting spring abides
> And never withering flowers, —
> Death like a narrow sea divides
> This heavenly land from ours.
> Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
> Stand dress'd in living green,
> So to the Israelites at Canaan stood
> While Jordan rolled between."

Into this strain the hymnists often fall. Thus sings our own Dr. Ray Palmer:—

"Are there bright happy fields
Where naught that blooms shall die,
Where each new scene fresh pleasure yields
And healthful breezes sigh?
Are there celestial streams
Where living waters glide
With murmurs sweet as angel dreams,
And flowery banks beside?"

And to him answers Thomas Olivers across the waves of a stormy sea and the snows of more than a hundred winters: —

"The goodly land I see
With peace and joy abound,
A land of sacred liberty
And endless rest;
There milk and honey flow,
And all and wine abound,
And trees of life forever grow
With mercy crowned."

And this singer's note, carried back by the retreating years, is echoed by David Dickson, who more than a century before him sang the praises of his "Mother dear, Jerusalem!"

"Right though thy streets with pleasing sound
The flood of life doth flow,
And on the banks on either side
The trees of life do grow;
Those trees each month yield fruited fruit,
Forevermore they spring;
And all the nations of the earth
To thee their homes bring."

And again, from a day far down the centuries, seven hundred years ago, the saintly Bernard of Cluny began this song that the world has not yet ceased to sing: —

"O fields that know no sorrow,
O state that fears no strife,
O priestly heaven, O land of flowers,
O realm and home of life!"

This is poetry, you say, and poetry proves nothing. I am not sure of that. On a subject of this sort the poets are better authorities than the exegetes and the logicians. They can tell us something about the native and inevitable instincts of the human heart. And these of us who believe in a good God believe that these instincts were divinely implanted and do not universally crave that which God does not mean to give.

If, now, the scenery of heaven be something like what these poets have imagined, — if field and wood and valley and hill and river and lake are to meet our vision, when we awaken in the life to come, — then it seems not irrational that this scenery will be inhabited and beautified by all kinds of animated existence. How lonely and forsaken would such a world as ours appear if man were its only inhabitant! How desolate would the forests be if there were no song-birds to fill them with melody, no squirrels chattering among the boughs, no crickets chirping under the leaves! How vacant would the landscape seem if there were no cattle feeding upon the plains, no lambs skipping upon the hillside, no signs anywhere of happy animal life!

These fellow creatures of ours have their place in this world as well as we. We are fond of assuming that the world was made for us, and in the

highest sense it is true; but there is plenty of evidence that it was made for them also, and that we without them could not be made perfect. The environment is fitted to their wants as well as to ours; they make up an important part of the happy harmony of nature, and I am not able to understand how their part can be spared from the symphony of life in the new heaven and the new earth.

There is a passage in the Epistle to the Romans in which Paul pictures the whole creation as sharing with man in the sorrow and misery due to his sin, and as looking forward with eager expectation to the consummation of the redemptive work, because, as he says, "the creation also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." The sympathy and identification of nature with man in this world point onward to a continuance of the same relations in the world to come. He will require extensive nature worth redeeming, with man, from the curse of sin would probably think it fit to be the environment of our life in all the ages of the future.

There is another consideration which to my mind has some force. The study of Nature has always been to man, and is becoming more and more to the best men, a source of the highest instruction and the deepest inspiration. Unsurveyed realms of truth are yet hidden from us in nature, waiting for us to come and explore their marvelous treasures. Here is a fountain of knowledge

that is, to our largest comprehension, apparently inexhaustible. And the truth which we thus seek in nature is God's truth. It is his thoughts that we find expressed in crystal and fossil, in tendril and tissue; it is his truth that we have all been pondering and collating and trying to organize into systems. It does not seem reasonable to me that when we pass onward to the life beyond, the book out of which the Creator has permitted us to gather so many of his wonderful thoughts is to be forever closed to us; that the secrets of nature which we have burned to know shall be forever sealed up. It is rather probable that with illumined minds and unwearied powers we shall be permitted to carry forward these investigations, — to penetrate more and more deeply into these hidden stores of wisdom. And if we are to study natural history, we must live among natural objects.

Such are some of the ways of thinking about the unknown future life which to my mind would have become natural and habitual. Much of all this is an inference, more or less legitimate, from that law of continuity which has come to rule in all the serious thinking of this generation. Yet I do not hide from myself the fact that it is largely the vision of what may be rather than the affirmation of what is or must be. If All I can say is that a conception like this makes the future life seem to me more real and more alluring than any other which I can frame. Believing, as I do, that the glory of going on is part of our high calling as the

sons of God, I like to think of how it will be in that Unknown Country toward whose borders time is swiftly bearing us all. You could ask me many questions about it all which I could not answer: you could point out to me, no doubt, anomalies and improbabilities in the conception I have shown you. But it is not a matter for dogmatism or controversy. Something like the manner of the life to come may be. That is all I can say about it. If to any of you these thoughts bring heaven nearer, and take something of the dread from the darkened way that leads to it, I shall have done all that I hoped to do.

One inference from all this reasoning is so obvious that I scarcely need mention it. If heaven is anything like this, the denial of the recognition and reunion of those who have loved one another here cannot disturb us. Individuality will not be lost in this translation. Our own will be their own dear selves. They may have gained fairer and nobler, but the essential elements of personality will be preserved; all the dear familiar traits and ways by which we knew them here we shall find in them there; they will be ours at once and forever. Nay, they are ours even now. Let us never speak of them as though they were not. We are parted from them a little space—who can tell how far? a little time—who knows how long? But they belong to us as much as ever they did. Love is ownership. Love is not dead. Love gave them to us; love knit our souls with theirs. In death

mightier than love? Nay, verily; for He whose name is Love hath conquered death. God gave to us these friends of ours. Is not every good and perfect gift from above?

> "God lent them and took them, you sigh:
> Nay, there let me break with your pain;
> God 's generous in giving, say I:
> And the thing that he gives, I deny
> That he ever can take back again."

Therefore, because He is good, and because his power is equal to his goodness, we believe that when we pass beyond the veil we shall soon find those who now, for a little while, are beyond our sight. The Infinite Love knows where they are and knows how much we need them, and his hand will quickly conduct us to the homes where they abide, to the places that they have made ready for us. Therefore from our hearts to them, and from their hearts to us, go sweet thoughts come and go like angels ascending and descending, weaving the web of hopes and imaginings between the life that now is and the life that is to come, and making the common joys of time the prelude and the promise of the life unending.

> "The good that we work for is hard to win,
> But our labor and worship are woven in
> To our marvelous web with the beauty we see,
> Unfolding from blossom and star and tree.
> That witless and aimless and ceaseless above
> Out into the deeps of Invisible Love.
> O spirits dear, who have vanished from sight,
> You are not lost in a splendor of light,
> That is as the dazzling soul of the sun;

There are many mansions, the home is one,
And the doors are open, the light shines through;
I am glad that I live in the world with you."...

And now will those who have followed me through these discussions suffer me for one moment to recall the question from which we started, — "How much is left of the old doctrines?" We have not considered them all; but we have had before our minds some of the most important of them, and we have tried to find out whether there is any truth in them. And what impression is left upon your minds? Doubtless we have discovered that much of extra-belief and superstition had gathered about these central truths which needed to be stripped off and cast away. The pruning-knife needs to be freely used in our theological husbandry. But, after all, have we not found that the great central truths of Christianity stand firm and true; that our enlarging knowledge of the universe has given us stronger reasons than we ever had before for believing in the everlasting reality of religion? Is not the life of faith and prayer, the life of obedience to the law of Christ, the life that finds its source and inspiration in things unseen and eternal, a rational life for you and me? If these things are so, they are worthy of all acceptation by all of us; and we shall hardly gain the consent of our better selves to ignore them or put them by.

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